

# Police Aviation News

©Police Aviation Research

Issue 341

September 2024



**AUSTRIAN HEMS  
RECEIVE 40th H135**



# EQUIPPED FOR MISSION SUCCESS



The integrated systems you need for mission success: TrakkaBeam®, TrakkaCam®, TrakkaMaps®, TrakkaStream®.

## TOTAL MISSION SOLUTIONS

Equip your crew for mission success with the world's first and only family of Total Mission Solutions — the result of Trakka Systems' two decades of relentless focus on innovation and critical vision technologies. We design our versatile products to perform individually or collectively for seamless integration as a complete package. Enhance safety, improve situational awareness, and unify your vision with Trakka Total Mission Solutions.

[trakkasystems.com/total-mission-solutions](http://trakkasystems.com/total-mission-solutions) | +1 813 815 4321



See. Save. Protect.



# EDITORIAL

Historically the left leaning Labour Party, the new party in power in the UK, tends to be good news for policing. The police have been better looked after by them in the past (which is good). Indeed the police got a pay rise within days of new government getting into power (which is also good, although no-one knows where they found the money).

Unfortunately at that point the scenario seems to have gone wrong, and law and order was seen to have gone off the rails. Strangely reflecting the volatility of public opinion in France, many previously tranquil areas erupted in disturbances, looting, arson and disobedience. The new government quickly diagnosed the cause as being the fault of right wing factions, just as the previous (right leaning) government had diagnosed earlier troubles as being caused by left wingers. No real change there then, and it looks like the recent police pay rise may well be earned by those that choose to stay on in the service!

Governments come and go but it is the Civil Servants that tend to provide continuity and the new government is using the same Civil Servants as the last administration so you might expect the output to look very similar and smell pretty much the same!

With nearly all the ministers in the new government having never served in the "front line" of a party in power before its pretty clear they are very much the office juniors for the time being and when they pontificate on anything they are pretty much reflecting what the long standing Civil Servants have been saying on behalf of the governments of the last decade or so with as much party political lean as seems appropriate at the time.

So when the new government state after just a few days of unrest they know that it is caused by "Extreme Right Wing" activists and that the police are bringing in Specialist Trained Officers you just know they are talking through the wrong orifice! No doubt there is a grain of truth there but as we know all too well, any government needs a minimum six month public enquiry and a thousand page report to decide such a thing! As for Specialist Trained Police Officers, well they are sheer myth. As we all know it takes at least a month for the average police officer to become a specialist!!!! As we have had no extreme right wingers for the last decade where can they learn their specialism?

The government met and held Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR) meetings with senior police officers and specialists from here there and everywhere and they went oh so well. Which does not really explain why the Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley came out of one such meeting in such a huff that he attacked and thrust to the ground an innocent reporters microphone.... If that had been a junior officer he would have been suspended immediately and sacked in short order. As it was there was not a murmur from the NPCC. Clearly, not a great deal has changed.

*Bryn Elliott*

# LAW ENFORCEMENT

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINIA

**SARAJEVO:** At the APSCON event at the beginning of August Bell Textron announced a signed purchase agreement for a SUBARU Bell 412EPX to the Sarajevo Canton Ministry of Interior, forming the agency's first helicopter unit.

The aircraft will support medical transport, citizen evacuation, and assistance in the event of natural disasters and incidents. Bell worked with the Sarajevo Canton police force and government to set up the deal.

The signing ceremony took place on June 4, 2024 at the Sarajevo Canton's Ministry of the Interior (Mol), in the presence of representatives of the United States Embassy, representatives of the cantonal and Federation (FBiH) entity authorities, and other dignitaries. The contract was signed by Admir Katica, Min-

**Cover:** OAMTC and have recently taken delivery of the 40th example of the H135, marked up as such but still carrying the test registration of D-HCBE. The first examples of the EC135T1 were acquired in 1998, some two years before the HEMS operation was evolved from the Austrian Police (in January 2001).

**Police Aviation News** is published monthly by **POLICE AVIATION RESEARCH**,  
7 Windmill Close, Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 3BQ UK.  
Contacts: **Cell:** +44 7778 296650 **Skype:** BrynElliott or +44 20 8144 1914  
**E-mail:** [editor@policeaviationnews.com](mailto:editor@policeaviationnews.com) and [policeaviation@hotmail.com](mailto:policeaviation@hotmail.com)

*Police Aviation Research Airborne Public Safety Association Member since 1994—Corporate Member since 2014*

#### SPONSORS

Anodyne Electronics  
Bell Textron  
ECS  
Teledyne FLIR Systems  
L3 Harris/Wescam  
Shotover  
Smith-Myers  
Trakka Systems

[www.aem-corp.com](http://www.aem-corp.com)  
[www.bellflight.com](http://www.bellflight.com)  
[www.enterprisecontrol.co.uk](http://www.enterprisecontrol.co.uk)  
[www.flir.com](http://www.flir.com)  
[www.l3harris.com](http://www.l3harris.com)  
[www.shotover.com](http://www.shotover.com)  
[www.artemis.smithmyers.com](http://www.artemis.smithmyers.com)  
[www.trakkasystems.com](http://www.trakkasystems.com)

Airborne Public Safety Association  
PAvCon Europe

[www.publicsafetyaviation.org](http://www.publicsafetyaviation.org)  
[www.pavconeurope.eu](http://www.pavconeurope.eu)

ister of the Interior of Sarajevo Canton, and Vedran Kljucanin, Director of “SHOT,” Bell’s supplier and regional Independent Representative (IR).

Bosnia and Herzegovina is part of the former Yugoslavia and Sarajevo, the capital of the region is a city on the Miljacka River, surrounded by the Dinaric Alps. Outside the region it is best remembered as being the site of the 1914 assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, an event that sparked World War I.

*Editor: The statement that this delivery will be the first helicopter unit in Sarajevo is misleading.*

*The city was part of Yugoslavia, a country that ceased to exist in February 2003. In the former country at least two Bell 206 JetRanger’s were operated by the police in Sarajevo but nothing is known of their fate after 2003.*

*In 2003-2004 the European Union Military Police (EUMP) based a AgustaWestland A109E Power in Sarajevo. The task of the EUMP was to monitor, mentor and inspect Local Police upper/mid management. Its mission in the region into 2005. The EUMP’s Power was fitted with police and emergency medical equipment.*

*Elsewhere in June 2020 the Government of Republika Srpska – a region of Bosnia and Herzegovina – confirmed an order for three Kazan Ansat helicopters for use by the police, to be based at Banja Luka and Sarajevo after deliveries scheduled for September 2020, May 2021 and January 2022. It is unlikely that the trio, reported by Russian agency RIA Novosti, were ever delivered due to the expansion of the war in Ukraine from February 2022. Most PWC powered Ansat’s were dumped in Africa as effectively unusable. They were expected to be operated by the government owned Helicopter Service of RS, which currently flies three Gazelles, a Bell 206 JetRanger and a Leonardo AW119 on air ambulance missions as well as undertaking ad-hoc police missions. Recent images of this fleet have been posted on-line but, predictably, there is no sign of the police Ansat’s.*

## CHILE

**CARABINEROS:** A new image has surfaced that confirms earlier news carried by Helihub this year.

At the April FIDAE Air Show, Airbus Helicopters announced it had delivered the first H125 to the Carabineros de Chile Air Prefecture, within the framework of a fleet growth plan to expand the air coverage of Carabineros de Chile throughout the country. Shortly after the show Helihub announced it was aware of fur-





ther sales to the agency, including an H135 and H145. The new photograph shows the H135 C-29 awaiting completion.

The line up of helicopters was taken in Germany a few weeks ago. Due to flooding at the Airbus Helicopters production plant in Donauwörth from the adjacent River Danube a lot of helicopters were parked on the main helipads for a few days. Helihub intelligence expects that this aircraft will be delivered from Germany imminently. This new H135 will join two EC135P2+ helicopters currently in service. The Chilean Carabinieri have a very mixed fleet of helicopters and fixed wing. Their active helicopters include Leonardo A109E and AW139, and Airbus Bo105, BK117, H125 and H135. [photo with permission but anonymous]

## CZECH REPUBLIC

**POLICE:** It may be that the police are about to announce the purchase of Airbus Helicopter H145 to supplement or replace their current fleet of 20-years old EC135 and Bell 412 helicopters.

In August 2024 Entrol, the manufacturer of EASA and FAA certified FNPT, FTD and FFS flight simulators, announced the sale of an H145 FNPT II MCC simulator to the Police of the Czech Republic.

This represents a significant milestone as the first Entrol flight training device to be installed in the country, further expanding the company's footprint in Europe. Entrol's H145 FNPT II MCC simulator is designed to provide high-fidelity training experiences due to a visual system powered by Xplane 11's extensive database, covering key airports such as Prague, Karlovy Vary, Ostrava, and Nuremberg. The simulator's mission scenarios package ensures that the Czech Police can train effectively for various critical situations. The additional options, such as virtual reality hoist management, a forward-looking infrared camera, a smoke machine, and an external mission mirror, significantly enhance the training realism. The Factory Acceptance Test was successfully completed on June 27th, thus installation and certification of the simulator are expected to follow shortly, providing the Czech Police with state-of-the-art training tools.

The newly implemented Spherical Visual 7-channel system, first used in the H145 FNPT II MCC simulator for the Czech Police, offers a superior 200° x 70° field of view. This visual system enhances vertical FOV, which is particularly beneficial for helicopter training, including challenging missions such as firefighting and search and rescue operations.

## FRANCE

**OLYMPICS:** Despite earlier worries about a lack of human and mechanical resources, the police support to the Olympics passed off without a great deal of worry and as this edition goes to press the Para Olympics are commencing.

French Navy CAMCOPTER® S-100 Unmanned Air System (UAS) Squadron secured the waters around Marseille for the Olympic events.

The CAMCOPTER® S-100 are stationed on board the French Navy's Flottille 36F in Var, and monitored the vicinity of the Olympic Games, a total of 22,500 nautical square miles. Flying from Saint-Mandrier (Var), the S-100s provided the authorities with real-time data of the maritime area towards Marseille, where a number of sailing, kitesurfing and windsurfing events took place.

While conducting these operations, the S-100 was equipped with a high performance EO/IR camera and an Automatic Identification System (AIS) to monitor and detect any suspicious activities at sea.



PAR File



## GERMANY

**LOWER SAXONY:** A year ago, the Lower Saxony logistics centre – the supply hub for all Lower Saxony departments ordered four H145 helicopters from Airbus for the state police forces in Lower Saxony (Niedersachsen) and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, as the state government of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

Last month the state government revealed the colour scheme for the H145 helicopters that are part of a joint procurement with the neighbouring state of Niedersachsen under which a single acquisition project decided the specification of a common platform, with each state then ordering two helicopters. As originally announced, these are expected to be delivered around the fourth quarter of 2025 and the first quarter of 2026.



Supplied

The colour scheme has a number of similarities - particularly the styling of the POLIZEI titles - although the overall colours are now dark blue and white, compared to dark green and red as currently used. The CGI images show that the aircraft will have a starboard-mounted hoist, nose-mounted EO/IR pod and the searchlight is shown in the style of a Trakka A800 [Landeswasserschutzpolizei MV/Parapex Media/PAR]



## PREMIER IMAGING, ITAR-FREE



The ITAR-FREE UltraFORCE 380-HDc provides premier EO/IR imaging in a compact, low-profile package. Ideal for missions which require SWaP considerations, without compromising capability and performance. The UltraFORCE 380-HDc is optimal for airborne reconnaissance, patrol, airborne law enforcement, and search and rescue missions.

[FLIR.COM/UF380PAN](https://www.flir.com/uf380pan)

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN: German prosecutors have opened an investigation into repeated drone flights over critical infrastructure in northern Germany on suspicion of espionage activity. The state is located in northwestern Germany and bordering Denmark. Being on the Jutland peninsula its east and west are international coastlines with the North Sea and Baltic.

The Flensburg public prosecutor's office has initiated a preliminary investigation on suspicion of "agent activity for sabotage purposes in connection with repeated drone flights."

The Bild newspaper, which first reported the investigation, cited an internal police report that said a no-fly zone over a nuclear power plant had been violated several times recently. According to Bild, sources within the state police agency assume that the so-far unidentified drones are Russian Orlan-10s, a fixed wing type which have a range of 500 to 600 kilometres and can fly over 100 kilometres an hour.



PAR File

Germany, one of Ukraine's biggest suppliers of military aid since Russia's invasion in 2022, has been on increased alert over sabotage activity, recently sealing off a military base on suspicions of contaminated tap water that turned out false. [Bild]

RHEILAND-PFALZ: The two H145s for Rhineland-Palatinate Police have been delivered. One is D-HRPC and the other assumed to be D-HRPD. The state's police helicopters are stationed at Winningen airfield near Koblenz.

Established flying helicopters forty years ago, the main aircraft currently operated by the unit are a pair of Eurocopter EC135P2 dating from 2002 and 2004. The role equipment of the EC135s was upgraded in 2018 by ESG Elektroniksystem- und Logistik-GmbH. The changes involved integration of the Star SAFIRE 380-HDc Electrooptical System into the high landing gear, integration of ESG's newly developed Police Tactical Workstation (PTANG) Operator Workstation and ESG's software-defined Mission Management System (ESGMM), an additional foldable cockpit display, HD-Downlink system and EuroNav 7 including SATCOM and FLARM. [Parapex/PAR]



## SPAIN

BASQUE: In the June issue of PAN (number 338) it was noted that the Basque Police (Ertzaintza) had taken delivery of two new H135 helicopters EC-OGK c/n 2258 and EC-OJK. At that time little other detail was available.

It has now been confirmed that like the original EC135s the pair are of the Safran powered T3 model and that they are owned by the police rather than leased. The unit has taken delivery of a new FLIR Star Sa-fire EO/IR sensor, two hoists and a pair of skids fitted with floatation devices.

## SURINAME

POLICE: Suriname plans two Airbus H125 for police use. Surinamese Minister of Justice and Police Kenneth Amoksi has recently visited the Airbus Helicopters production facility in France to discuss a potential purchase of two Airbus H125s for the Police in this South American company, according to reports from local media United News and De West

The purchase is to provide better coverage and significantly improved response times in the huge interior of Suriname. This area is principally forest. This news was announced at a government press conference.

The budget for this purchase is around \$10M, although the minister added "the plans to purchase the helicopters are ready, but the execution depends on the available finances". Delivery was reported as 8-14 months from finance approval.

The announcement also highlighted Helibras, the Airbus subsidiary in neighbouring Brazil. This is expected to make the purchase and delivery costs of the helicopters attractive. No word was given as to whether other helicopter types were considered, or whether the country's purchasing methodology required multiple offers to be considered.



The Suriname Police ("Korps Politie Suriname") currently operates a BK117 with back-up from a small military air corps as required. [Parapex Media/HeliHub]

*Editor: Suriname is a small country on the northeastern coast of South America, covering 163,270 sq. km with 386km coastline and, in 2022, a population of 632,000 mainly living on the coastal strip. It was granted Independence from the Netherlands in 1975. Its location has placed it at the centre of drugs traffic destined for Europe and Brazil; as well as a transshipment point for arms-for-drugs dealing. Some parts of the forest covered country are practically ungovernable INTERPOL Maintains a presence there.*



## UNITED KINGDOM

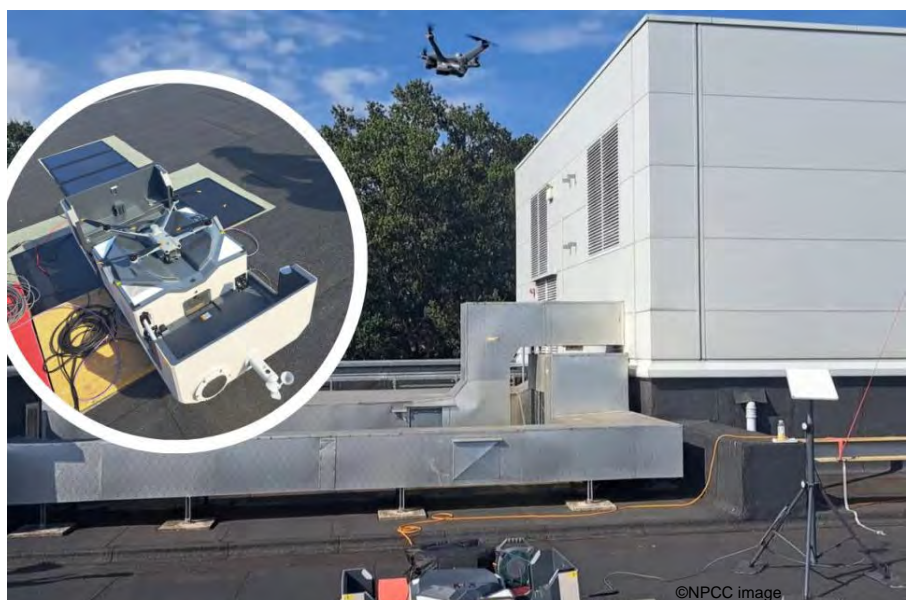
**UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA:** Last month PAN reported on the first trial flight of the 'First Responder' drone equipment at a festival on the Isle of Wight.

Right on the publication day of *Police Aviation News* (August 1) the National Police Chiefs Council announced through the PA Wire that late in July there had been a further launch and demonstration of the Drones as first responders (DFR) technology in Norwich.

A drone, housed in a box on a nearby rooftop, was deployed to search for a man playing the role of a missing person at the University of East Anglia (UEA). As previously announced, the demonstration comes as part of a national trial to establish if and how the technology could be used to assist police response. As intended the trials are taking place in Norfolk which currently has limited access to the helicopters flown by the National Police Air Service due to 'proximity' (there isn't one available within a reasonable distance).

In the demonstration the drone flew over the scene, was then able to beam back real-time imagery to an officer, who sat at a set of screens in the back of a police van parked nearby. As previously noted, the potential benefits include the ability to deploy the drone at a "moment's notice" to provide live images while police make their way to the scene.

The stated wider expectation is that the drones are expected to "assist with area searches, road incidents, issues in town centres, public order incidents and the night-time economy." That comes across as near enough everything which is perhaps expecting a lot of a mere drone! The





night time economy presumably embraces everything from drinks, drugs, gang warfare and prostitution. Again a lot for a drone that was previously marketed as a simple first responder, 'eyes in the sky'.

The trial will take a "phased approach" to ensure the technology does not interfere with other airway regulators and is integrated safely. Police data will be assessed over the next year and a half to see how the technology relates to policing activity.

Police forces in England and Wales currently use around 400 drones to assist with operations, but these must be flown within the operator's line of sight whereas the DFR are supposed to be autonomous. The initial trials will be still be effectively line of sight in four closed off airspace test areas until the DFR craft potentially earn a right to have the rules amended and enable autonomy, beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS).

The first drone to be put under trial is housed on a building at the University of East Anglia. Norfolk Police say up to five drone sites could cover the entire city.

Superintendent Phill Gray said: "We've used drones for a long time.

"This will give us a control centre that can launch a drone at designated sites through Norwich to get to the scene in a timely fashion."

Supt Taryn Evans, who is running the project for the National Police Chiefs' Council, said: "We don't anticipate this replacing officers or the response they give to emergency calls in anyway whatsoever.

"What we do hope to see is that gives them enhanced advantage in working out how to respond to those same calls.

"It might be that there's a risk there that wasn't reported to us by the people that called in that we need to be aware of and we would send different units there to deal with that accordingly."

But the project could undergo another two or three years of trials and analysis before becoming an operational part of police kit.

Supt Gray added: "We have to make sure it's safe. That is the key element that's going to take time.

"How long that is, I don't know. We are working very closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Home Office to make sure that we have a safe operating model for beyond line of sight drone as a drone responder.

"It would be beneficial if in the next two or three years we are in a position where we could safely deploy that across the country."

The trial was part of a multi-million-pound scheme announced by Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor in the last (Conservative) government, in his final Budget. It is claimed that police officers waste around eight hours a week on unnecessary admin – with higher productivity, we could free up time equivalent to 20,000 officers over a year. That government proposed to spend £230M rolling out time and money saving technology which speeds up police response time by allowing people to report crimes by video call and where appropriate use drones as first responders.

Regardless of the accuracy of the Hunt statements, the original plan may well be modified by the new government in timescale and budget.

*Editor: A great deal of the rhetoric surrounding DFR is based on theories based on small scale trials in small towns emergency services operations in the United States. Some of those are using small craft manufactured in China that are effectively banned for government emergency services*



*use in the USA as a security risk and none of them have yet decided on a craft that meets the previously hard wired need for twin engines over built up areas in UK airspace. Another aspect that may deter easy progress in the flight safety arena is the apparent dearth of emergency services personnel with a good understanding of the 'rules of the air' ..... most have long since retired or had their services dispensed with. There were never very many of them in the first place. Difficulties have already shown up with operating drones and helicopters side by side. Has anyone even considered how these beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) craft might interact with privately owned light aircraft not currently required to have collision avoidance technology? It may not be an immediate problem in closed university airspace in Norfolk but remember this is designed to be rolled out nationwide and not everyone will be focussed on survival in BVLOS airspace.*

*Nonetheless the Norfolk trial is going to be an important showcase of just how effective DFR can be at supporting our response to emergency (999) calls, arriving on scene quickly and giving invaluable 'eyes in the sky'.*

*The assumption that DFR will happen, and that it will happen in short order may well be in for a few shocks. The setting up of the apparently simple fixed wing side of NPAS – a technology that is as old as the hills - has been anything but straightforward and still struggles to provide the value for money originally envisaged.*

*Then there is the cost and logistics of the plan. Google states that there are 75 cities in the UK, then you can add a few large towns and the centres of population in Scotland and Ireland. If each of these is going to have a very modest three DFR units set up we are quickly faced with over 500 units to fund. Then there is the matter of maintaining all those bases and their miniature flying machines. At the moment the industry struggles to find enough engineers to keep the, admittedly more complex, NPAS helicopters in the air – but at least the current job is centralised, I am not sure there will be many engineers keen on climbing 500 rooftops and poles on even a weekly basis.*

The initial announcement attracted public comment and it was not all rosy. Quotes noted on the Norwich Evening News website included this one...

*"I'm being stabbed, in flies a drone. "You just stop that you naughty person" comes from the drones speaker. How pathetic."*

## **MORE DRONES—THE BIG LEAGUE**

To compound the information overload on future use of drones a few days later the UK Civil Aviation Authority and National Air Traffic Control Service announced that they were setting up further trials with drones that would involve all the emergency services, the police and NHS in particular as well as delivery organisations including Amazon. What was not clear was that the project was relating to far in the future. Not all the media understood that and it was usually presented as something that would be seen 'next year.'

As they were specifically mentioned NPAS put out their own version of the press announcement and that too was imprecise in its meaning.

NPAS is to test out the feasibility of 'BVLOS' drones to support police forces in England and Wales. Working with the NATC and CAA, NPAS will be able to test out the technology to ensure it meets air regulations and see how it can work alongside existing helicopter capability. These craft were to be sizable and able to fly for 6 hours. Just like the NPAS fixed wing in fact.

In a controversial statement it was said that the drones will be flown from a ground station by qualified NPAS pilots, supported by highly experienced tactical flight officers. That statement needs qualifying.

The trials are funded by the Home Office as part of a wider investment into drone technology in policing. David Walters, Head of Futures and Innovation, NPAS says that if the concept is proven, the vision is for highly skilled crew members to pilot the uncrewed aircraft from selected NPAS bases, using the experience and expertise of its tactical flight officers "to maximise their effectiveness in delivering successful police operations."

"As technology advances, so do the opportunities for police air support. The trial will be operating uncrewed aircraft capable of staying airborne for more than six hours and fitted with mission equipment comparable to those on the existing NPAS fleet.

"If trials are successful, this will enable delivery of a very highly capable air support blended fleet of police helicopters, aeroplanes and uncrewed aircraft in future years."



The trials, which are expected to begin in Spring 2025, will be run from an NPAS base in the south west which has been selected for its unique position to operate over water for ‘aircraft shakedown testing,’ and then progress inshore once levels of safety assurance have been met. NPAS is currently working with Blue Light Commercial to procure a UAS supplier for the trial.

*Editor: Since this document was posted to the media PAN has been able to clarify many of the details. For a start David Walters, Head of Futures and Innovation, NPAS should be taken as something of a Doctor Who figure. These trials may well be commencing in 2025 but this is very much a future programme. Where the DFR programme has a technical basis for the future – as demonstrated by those US programmes undertaken in small town USA – there is very little in being for the BVLOS programme, except perhaps the Tekever programme being flown over the English Channel and various European seaways and the mega-expensive Sea Guardian selected by the Japan Coast Guard and slated for trial by the UK Coastguard.*

*The idea that current NPAS pilots and TFOs might be cajoled into undertaking the mission is very much in the future and it is unlikely that anyone in post today will still be around when this element of the project sees the light of day. Initial work will be entrusted to BlueLight—note that they still have to answer my last question about helicopters so they are no mine of information.*

*Unlike DFR there is no presumption that the BVLOS envisaged in the press release will ever take place. Even the humble Tekever is expensive and the other types with potential are high grade military systems that each currently cost all of the annual costs of NPAS today..*

### DRONES AT THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SHOW

For those able to visit the Emergency Service Show 2024 at the NEC, Birmingham later this month (18-19 September) there is an opportunity to learn more about how drones are being used in UK policing and fire and rescue services. Keith Bennett (Drones Manager SME., College of Policing) and Tim Murrell (Drones Lead, National Fire Chiefs Council) will be speaking on the Technology Main Stage at 1100 on September 18.

While you are at the ESS event it may be worthwhile seeking out representatives from the Home Office. Perhaps ask them why the apparently ‘Work From Home’ department is failing to deliver.



PAR File

Where is the evidence for Home Office failure? It is there for all to see in the debacle that is the Emergency Services Network (ESN), the much delayed new communications system, the failure to secure the borders, process would be illegal asylum migrants, over full prisons, and of course the planning, setting up, operation and day-to-day running of NPAS, and in particular the flawed arrangements made for replacing the aircraft fleet.

As Sir Ian Duncan Smith, former Conservative leader and MP has said – “(The Home Office) is a byword for utter shambolic failure – not fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century”

### MINUTES EMERGE

Late in July, but too late for inclusion last month, I noted that NPAS had belatedly released the minutes of the first two meetings of 2024 for the National Strategic Board. As these were February and March they did not directly include the discussions relating to the still unanswered query about why NPAS sought to cancel the helicopters sought for NPAS London. However, the March minutes did show some of the deliberations preceding the meeting at which the decision was made.



PAR File

**SM**  
**smith myers**

turns ANY MOBILE PHONE INTO A LOCATION BEACON

DETECT - LOCATE - COMMUNICATE

[artemis.smithmyers.com](http://artemis.smithmyers.com)

**ARTEMIS**

As ever these mainly on-line meetings drew a large crowd who gather together to decide on the future of police aviation in Britain. It would be great to see the names of aviation professionals who might be expected to do the best for our brave but officially dwindling band of fliers.

Good to see that the West Yorkshire Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is Alison Lowe OB chose to alert the meeting that she holds a Directorship with Blue Light Commercial the erstwhile representatives of NPAS for the ever forthcoming purchase of new helicopters.



Wikipedia

Alison is a Labour politician, with a background of gaining a Masters Degree in Medieval studies in 1993, being a city councillor, the CEO of Touchstone, a mental health charity, being awarded the 2014 Forward Business Woman of the Year award and Stonewall Senior Champion of the Year in 2015. None of which has any bearing on helicopter purchase, or even any branch of aviation. Where I might be wrong of course is if that Masters degree in Medieval studies included elements drawn from the thoughts of Leonardo da Vinci. He did helicopters.



WYPA

It turns out that NPAS is underspending on its budget. Certainly they have money left over because they are short of staff and by all accounts having to utilise the staff members they have beyond their normal hours. This is not solely an NPAS problem, police across the land are voting with their feet and getting out of policing. The reasons are varied but one repetitive theme appears to be a lack of belief in the management.

From Pprune Rotorheads comes the latest stats for the performance of NPAS in the last year. The numbers are supplied by NPAS but have been regularly analysed by "MG" in all recent years.

The stats for the year 2023/24 show that flying hours are down, but only slightly, apart from the Fixed Wing which are down by a third from last year. All but two Forces are paying more than last year.

The way that NPAS charges Forces is still a mystery. Although they don't charge on a per Actioned Call basis, it's a handy way of comparing, so Norfolk paid the equivalent of £15,387 for their 18 Actioned Calls, whereas Gwent paid £1,486 for their 449. Maybe one day they will explain it all. [MG/Rotorheads]

**COMMERCIAL  
UAV EXPO**

**10<sup>TH</sup> EDITION**

**SEPT. 3-5, 2024**  
CAESARS FORUM / LAS VEGAS

**REGISTER  
NOW**

**REGISTRATION  
IS OPEN!**







## UNITED STATES

**NATIONAL:** Just a few days after hosting their own APSCON event in Houston the US based APSA announced that it was attending the Commercial UAV Expo in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The Expo is an international conference event exclusively focused on commercial UAS integration, operation and real-world use cases that drive efficiency, safety, and effectiveness. Attendees can also expect to hear about cross-industry and broader themes, such as FAA regulation for BVLOS operations, data management, AI strategies, battery range, and more, as presenters will explore the current landscape and uncover the opportunities and challenges ahead.

The event will take place this month September 3-5, 2024, at Caesars Forum in Las Vegas, NV and APSA will be there. Stop by booth # 853 to visit with APSA CEO Dan Schwarzbach and Training Program Manager Dan Knight to learn how APSA training can enhance your public safety UAS operations.



**ALABAMA:** Trakka has recently announced the supply of its sensor and mapping system to outfit one of the aircraft assigned to the Ozark Alabama based Wiregrass Aviation Support Program (WASP). The featured aircraft is the 1969 Bell OH-58A N264LE which was taken into service by Dothan Police in the summer of 2022. It flies in Dothan marks but the FAA ownership is with Dale County Sheriffs Office.

This growing consortium includes aircraft operated in the markings of Dotham City Police, Dale County Sheriff, Enterprise Police Department, Coffee County Sheriff's Office and the Houston County Sheriff's Office.



Two of the Wiregrass fleet of OH58 helicopters—N268DC Dale County was originally 72-21403 with the military. The black and white craft is N264LE 69 -16100 Dothan Police and is fitted with the Trakka sensor. [Wiregrass]

WASP initially began operations in 2001 as the aviation unit of the Dale County Sheriff's Office and later expanded to provide additional support and partnerships throughout the Wiregrass. They have now expanded to provide public safety aviation services in support of law enforcement agencies, fire departments, search and rescue missions, and other community partnerships within a ten-county service area in

southeast Alabama. Those counties are Barbour, Butler, Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston, and Pike.

The 501(c)3 nonprofit organization is funded through a combination of local government appropriations, grants, and community donations.

With a fleet of four mission-ready OH58 helicopters and two fixed wing Cessna airplanes, WASP stands ready to assist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They provide aerial observation services for law enforcement, storm damage assessment photography and videography, search and rescue operations, and official transport.

Strong partnerships are the backbone of any effective organization and include: Dothan Police Department, Enterprise Police Department, Coffee County Sheriff's Office, Dale County Sheriff's Office, and the Houston County Sheriff's Office.



**ARIZONA:** The Yavapai County Sheriff's Office located in Prescott and Humboldt, AZ, has a well established history of helicopter use. An upsurge in missing persons, especially children, lead to Yavapai County based Guidance Aviation to donate a Robinson R44 helicopter to the Sheriff's Office in 2010. In the years since, the helicopter has proven to be invaluable and has been successful in locating many lost and injured persons.

As the donated airframe was a basic R44 its capabilities have been limited. Without specialized mission equipment search operations were limited to daytime only and the basic model of the helicopter also has wind speed /gust performance limitations. As a result Yavapai County have been researching the possibilities of acquiring a more capable replacement with a sensor system and searchlight.

Last year the Sheriff's Office applied for a US Department of Justice grant for use in procuring a new helicopter for SAR and other missions. They were awarded \$2,108,000 in funding. The procurement process has continued since then. Currently the agency has been vetting two different aircraft models with final pre-purchase inspections and demonstration flights occurring soon. A final decision will follow soon after. The selected airframe will be equipped with specialized role equipment. The agency's Robinson R44 will be sold off as part of the process to buy the new helicopter. The unit also operates a six seat Cessna fixed wing, mainly on extradition flights. In addition, since 1996, the Yavapai County Sheriff's Air Group has been providing air assets to assist with Search and Rescue, Smoke Patrols, and Law Enforcement missions in Northern Arizona from a base at Ernest A Love Field in Prescott. The volunteers meet regularly for meetings and training sessions in preparation for aerial search and rescue missions. Operating privately owned aircraft, members regularly contribute to successful rescue efforts. Many of these were reduced to hours of searching instead of several days which was typical before the group's formation.

[Christian Shepherd/PAR]

**ARIZONA:** Bell Textron Inc., announced the signed purchase agreement of a Bell 505 N907PF c/n 65559 to the City of Peoria, Arizona during APSCON 2024 in Houston, marking the first helicopter to join the Peoria Police and Fire Department's newly-launched joint Aviation Unit that will support firefighting and law enforcement missions. The Peoria budget request includes \$3.5M for the helicopter as well as \$1M for ongoing costs that would include \$600,000 for salaries.

The Bell will serve 195,000 residents located in the outskirts of Phoenix, Arizona and surrounding West Valley cities. With the added capabilities of the Bell 505, the Aviation Unit plans to rapidly improve emergency response times throughout the city and expand its public



[Facebook]



safety missions, including its search and rescue efforts and firefighting services. The City of Peoria is 180 square miles, with an overall planning area of 233 square miles, which is a lot of ground to cover.

The Bell 505 is outfitted with a Safran Arrius 2R engine, dual channel FADEC, Garmin G1000H NXi avionics suite, Trakka searchlight under the rear of the cabin and a nose mounted EO/IR sensor. As part of the purchase agreement, the customer participated in Bell's police aviation startup consultation service, a unique customer service offering where Bell public safety experts work step-by-step with public safety units interested in launching an aviation unit. . [Mike Hannahs Image by George Arana Facebook]

Trakka Systems, a leading provider of critical vision technologies for airborne public safety missions, announced the successful delivery and installation of two Total Mission Solutions for the Tucson Police Air Support Unit. The Tucson Police Department (TPD), established in 1972, operates a fleet of three Bell 206 helicopters to patrol and secure the city of Tucson, Arizona. These two newly equipped aircraft will now benefit from Trakka's cutting-edge technology, empowering officers with a comprehensive suite of airborne patrol capabilities to strengthen situational awareness and streamlines operations.

Each Trakka Total Mission Solution deployed by the Tucson PD Air Support Unit comprises: TrakkaCam TC-300: A gyro-stabilized, compact EO/IR imaging system providing high-definition video and thermal imagery for superior day and night surveillance. TrakkaBeam TLX: A high-intensity xenon searchlight offering powerful illumination for nighttime operations, search and rescue missions, and traffic stops. TrakkaMaps TM-100: A mission mapping and video management system that integrates seamlessly with TrakkaCam and TrakkaBeam, allowing for real-time data overlay on maps, simplified flight path planning, and streamlined evidence management.

CALIFORNIA: In 2023 the City of Modesto Police Department, covering an area east of San Francisco acquired a 2012 GippsAero GA8-TC-320 Airvan from CNC. The Airvan was previously operating with the Pennsylvania State Police.



Giving you the **information** you need **instantly**

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**

**ECS**  
TACTICAL DATA LINKS

Discover more at [enterprisecontrol.co.uk](https://enterprisecontrol.co.uk)

Reregistered, and now operating with the Air Unit's as Sky 1 the aircraft has made a huge impact in 2024! With 1,807 calls for service so far this year, Sky 1 has proven to be a critical asset. First on scene 1,259 times, it has helped with 94 felony arrests for Modesto and other agencies.

CALIFORNIA: CNC Technologies has been selected by the Pasadena Police Department to upgrade the searchlights on three of their agency helicopters. The fleet includes a mix of Bell OH-58 Kiowa and an MD500E, these are currently fitted with the venerable Spectrolab SX-16.



The project calls for delivery and installation of the new TrakkaBeam TL360. The Trakka delivers brighter and more consistent illumination while reducing power consumption as compared to older generation systems. This upgrade will improve visibility, safety and operational efficiency for the police department's aviation unit.

The TrakkaBeam® TL-360 LED/LEP hybrid searchlight is marketed as a game-changer, providing operators with 360° illumination while using just 1/3 of the power compared to similar systems. Ideal for platforms that value both capabilities and lightweight design. Featuring a lightweight and compact single LRU configuration, the TL-360 provides simplified installation and integration, eliminating the need for power conditioning or external interface units. Its inertial stabilization enhances performance during aircraft maneuvers, reducing external vibrations. Its appearance differs greatly from that of the earlier Trakka searchlight.

The TL-360, suitable for fixed-wing, rotary-wing, light aircraft, and manned or unmanned platforms. With solid-state components, it offers robustness and is highly expandable and upgradeable.

FLORIDA: The Miami-Dade Police Department has placed an order for four new Airbus H125 helicopters. These additions will enhance the department's aerial capabilities, further strengthening its commitment to public safety and operational efficiency.

The Miami-Dade Police Department currently operates an all-Airbus fleet consisting of four H125s.

Further north in central Florida the Polk County Sheriff's Office has just taken delivery of a Kodiak 100 fixed wing role equipped with a Trakka EO/IR sensor system. The aircraft was collected from Southeast Aerospace in Melbourne, FL where the Trakka gear was installed.

Recently Polk has taken delivery of a Robinson R66 Police helicopter N211SL equipped with a Wescam MX-10 EO/IR imaging system and disposed of earlier assets including 2013 MD369E by way of auction.







Colin Boyle/Block Club Chicago

ILLINOIS: Chicago Police have acquired a Bell 429. The acquisition of the Bell was made public in March this year. The purchase was to ensure that the city had suitable helicopters in place for major events scheduled for the year. The current fleet is a pair of Bell 206's.

A contract had been signed for the acquisition of two single engine Bell 407s at the start of the year but delivery was not expected before December 2024 so the twin engine 429 was acquired to arrive before the Democratic National Convention [DNC] on 19-22 August. The airframe was available thanks to a customer cancellation. It was spotted flying early in August. At that time the aircraft was still registered to Bell so it may only be a temporary arrangement while the arrival of the Bell 407s is awaited. Nonetheless the city has agreed to pay over \$11M for it using funds from the BJA FY 24 Presidential Nominating Convention Grant, a programme specifically set up to support the Presidential Conventions. [The source of the image of N911ZP c/n 57505 is not known, it appeared on social media - Jon Goldin]

LOUISIANA: Bell Textron announced the delivery of two Bell 407GXis to Louisiana State Police at AP-SCON 2024, bringing their total number of Bell aircraft to nine.

The Louisiana State Police's Air Support Unit remains on-call, twenty-four hours a day, to provide emergency response assistance to all local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies within the state. With the added capabilities of the Air Support Unit's new Bell 407GXis, the Louisiana State Police is expecting to significantly expand upon their public safety mission portfolio. The newly delivered Bell 407GXis will join the Air Support Unit's seven other Bell aircraft, including a Bell 407GXP, two Bell 430s, a Bell UH-1H, a Bell UH-1V, Bell Huey II and a Bell 206L-IV Long Ranger.

PHI MRO Services, a global leader in helicopter maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services, announced at the 2024 Airborne Public Safety Association Conference (APSCON) that it has been awarded a completion contract for two Bell 407 GXis by the Louisiana State Police's Air Support Unit. The Bell 407s will undergo comprehensive completion services at PHI's state-of-the-art MRO facility in Lafayette, LA. These services will include the installation of mission-specific equipment, avionics integration and custom interior modifications tailored to the operational needs of the Louisiana State Police. This significant contract underscores PHI MRO Services' reputation for excellence and its role in enhancing public safety aviation capabilities by serving the law enforcement and government markets.

MICHIGAN: The Detroit Police Department has purchased a used Bell 407 helicopter in a direct deal with Bell Textron. The aircraft was purchased using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, which followed a separate request and approval process from the items funded through the adopted budget process. An official request for \$2.3M was made to the Detroit City Council in April this year.

The procurement process has been completed and the Police Department is now waiting on delivery and final inspection of the helicopter. Currently, Detroit operates one Bell OH-58A and Bell OH-58C. Funds were also authorized to renovate the unit's hangar.

Detroit Police Department has more than 2,500 officers responsible for policing Detroit's 139 square miles. [Facebook]

MISSISSIPPI: The Harrison County Sheriff's Office based in Gulfport is touting new upgrades to its now 75 years old helicopter.

The 1971 Bell OH-58A N304SD is now outfitted with multi-sensor surveillance cameras and mapping systems from Trakka Systems. The upgrades allow pilots to get a better bird's eye view of subjects or objects.

According to Chief Pilot Brandon Hendry the unit now has access to high-definition infrared sensors, laser range finder, high-definition colour video cameras, and an integrated mapping system that allows the unit to see a lot more detail. They can now fly higher, safer, a more proficiently in the helicopter and that allows them to be more successful." [WXV]

*Editor: The 1971 Bell OH-58A N304SD 71-20767 c/n 41628 was released by the military for police service in the summer of 1995*

TEXAS: The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), Aircraft Operations Division is seeking to purchase a new Airbus H145 D3 Helicopter(s) to replace its current fleet. The recent solicitation requires the delivery of one or more new H145-D3 helicopters with specific capabilities, including factory warranty, air conditioning system, external hoist, fast rope provisions, reinforced cabin, high density seating, and various optional equipment.



## EVOLVING EO/IR TECHNOLOGY FOR ADVANCED MISSIONS

Supporting global airborne law enforcement agencies with 45 years of product evolution and flight-proven technologies.

Missions are longer, more complex and need to be executed faster. More is expected of you and your crew each and every time you fly. L3Harris' electro-optical and infrared systems are designed with the latest technologies to address changing mission requirements. Delivering robust performance and ease-of-use, WESCAM MX™-Series sensor systems enable operators to see more, operate easier and analyze live video intelligence with confidence. When minutes count, trust WESCAM MX-Series systems to help you see first and act first.



Scan to learn more.  
L3Harris.com





The initial purchase of one helicopter and the phrase "replace its current fleet" indicates that Texas DPS plans to replace their currently serving 2008 model H145 C2 registered as N145TX.

It looks like they are also leaving the option open to possibly buy additional H145s in the future. Currently Texas DPS operates a large fleet of H125 helicopters and the single legacy H145 in addition to a fixed wing fleet that includes Cessna light singles, Cessna 208 Caravan's and examples of the Pilatus PC-12 Spectre .

WASHINGTON: Bell Textron Inc. announced a signed purchase agreement for the sale of a Bell 505 to Spokane County Sheriff's Office during APSCON 2024, highlighting its legacy of operating an all-Bell emergency response aviation fleet.

In 2005, the Spokane Regional Air Support Unit was created following the United States Army's donation of a Bell OH-58 helicopter to the department. Since then, the Air Support Unit has expanded its fleet with an additional Bell OH-58 and a Bell UH-1H. With the recent purchase of a Bell 505, the Unit is planning to expand upon their search and rescue, homeland security, and natural disaster damage assessment support.



APSCON 2025  
PHOENIX  
JULY 14 – 19  
AIRBORNE PUBLIC SAFETY ASSOCIATION





# AIR AMBULANCE



## AUSTRIA

OAMTC: The air ambulance continues to operate the Airbus Helicopters EC135/H135 series and have recently taken delivery of their 40th example, marked up as such but still carrying the test registration of D-HCBE. The first examples of the EC135T1 were acquired in 1998 when the operation was part of the police BMI..

## MALDIVES

**AIR AMBULANCE:** On August 5, the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation of the Maldives published a document inviting interested parties to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) for helicopter operations aimed at enhancing national emergency services. They foresee the establishment of a helicopter service for responsive EMS and SAR work across the archipelago of over 100 islands, which add up to a total land area of 115 sq. miles. The initial plan calls for a ten year contract, and comes with a significant incentive. The successful bidder will also be given the exclusive right to operate tourist transfers by helicopter, with final terms to be agreed later in the process. At present, tourist transfers are all flown by seaplane, and almost entirely by DHC-6 Twin Otters. The Ministry is seeking operators who can “demonstrate efficient Helicopter operations in the Maldives, with a particular emphasis on the unique challenges posed by island environments”.

Following the EOI phase, the Ministry will commence a Request for Proposal process, exclusively involving parties that have submitted their EOIs. A detailed Bid Document will be issued to provide more details to ensure proposals in alignment with the strategic goals of the Ministry. This approach ensures a targeted and effective collaboration with operators who have a demonstrated capability in delivering safe and efficient helicopter services. Submissions of EOI were to be submitted on August 19.

There have not been helicopter services in the Maldives for over 20 years, there was a period from 1989-1999 when three operators – Hummingbird Airways, Seagull Airways Helicopters and Maldivian Air Taxi – operated a range of larger twins including Sikorsky S61, Bell 212 and Mil Mi-8. Rotary wing flights were stopped by the local civil aviation authority following fatal accidents in January and December 1999. [Parapex Media]

*Editor: The Republic of Maldives, an island group, is in the Indian Ocean southwest of Sri Lanka and India, some 400 nautical miles from the Asian continent's mainland. The chain of atolls constitutes the smallest country in Asia having a population of just over half a million people.*



## UNITED KINGDOM

DEVON: Devon Air Ambulance will host their first Medi-Connect conference, kindly sponsored by Zoll and SES, next month. The charity is looking forward to welcoming attendees to Exeter Racecourse on September 24 for this fully interactive and educational experience, the first of its kind in the Southwest.

The 2024 Medi-Connect Conference designed for those in the pre-hospital emergency services will focus on rural responding, emphasising agricultural incidents. This new and innovative day of sharing knowledge and learning from each other is relevant to those already working in pre-hospital emergency response, or those interested in doing so.

The conference aims to bring together pre-hospital health care professionals and experts to display the latest trends, innovations, and challenges within the sector, exploring innovative strategies, sharing best practice, and fostering collaboration to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency medical response care in the UK.

Attendees are invited to take part in an educational and informative day delivered through a series of presentations, demonstrations, and workshops. It offers an ideal opportunity to support personal development, with presentations on topics such as managing open fractures, exposure, drowning, and neuro rehabilitation.

This free to attend conference also provides an opportunity to network and collaborate with other healthcare professionals and speak to industry experts at the trade stands.

Devon Air Ambulance has seen an incredible response to Medi-Connect 2024 with spaces filling up fast. To register for your free place or to find out more, please visit: <https://daatcl.co.uk/medi-connect-conference/>

LONDON: With meaningful factory support for the MD900 continuing to decline the London Air Ambulance based on the roof of the London Hospital in Whitechapel, East London, two years ago they decided to move across to a new helicopter type – the Airbus Helicopters H135. The last time fleet replacement decisions were made, in 2015, the type was rejected in favour of adding a further MD900 as it was larger and less street friendly for the typical flight profile preferred by London.

Having to replace both aircraft at the same time was challenging and since 2022, the charity has been fundraising for two new helicopters to replace its existing fleet, with a total cost of £15M to buy the new aircraft and keep them flying.

Late in the 2-year campaign and with delivery of the new airframes looming, a group called Omaze plugged the charity into a prize draw for a multi-million prize draw and added millions of pounds to the fundraising. They were £3M short of their total and the Omaze deal brought in £4M despite only commencing in June this year.

The two H135T3 helicopters, [G-LAAA c/n 2242 and G-LAAB c/n 2246] have been sighted several times since February this year in Germany and have progressed to

**PARACLETE**  
AVIATION LIFE SUPPORT

**MISSION READY**

FIRST IN  
**COMFORTABLE PROTECTION**

- safety
- comfort
- service

- Light weight - 1.36 kg
- Adjustable to all head sizes
- ANR Headphones
- CEP Installation
- NVG mounts
- Yellow tinted visors
- Laser Protection visor
- Maxillofacial Shield
- GoPro Adapter
- Flashlight Mounts with Flashlight
- Custom Color
- Rails

FAST DELIVERY

FAST REPAIR SERVICE

LIGHT WEIGHT

**CHS**  
Commercial Helicopter Services  
kontakt@chs-helicopter.de  
+49 4271 9554245

**PARACLETE**  
AVIATION LIFE SUPPORT  
authorized distributor  
certified service center  
europe

**chs-helicopter.de**



role fit completion at Airbus, Oxford (above). On August 7 one of their H135s did some test flights from their home/overnight base at RAF Northolt to the Royal London Hospital and also St George's Hospital in Tooting.

The outgoing MD900 fleet includes the 24 years old G-EHMS c/n 00068 and the 16 years old G-LNDN c/n 000125. The latter appears to have a sale progressing, as the CAA are reporting it has an Export C of A application in progress.

*North Weald Sunday July 14. A line up of air ambulance AW169 helicopters including Essex & Herts, the former Magpas machine and a former Children's Air Ambulance airframe. The latter are operating as spares in support of the feet [PAR]*

MAGPAS: It is reported that the charity air ambulance service will be renewing its aircraft supply contract with Castle Air in Cornwall after they reportedly found that the current helicopter type, the Leonardo AW169, was too expensive to support. Created as a ground asset using cars to send doctors to the scene of need, the air element of Magpas was born operating part time with the police in Cambridgeshire [initially on a police AS355F2, then an MD902 Explorer] before the creation of NPAS obliged them to operate only cars again. They eventually financed the lease of an MD902 from Specialist Aviation Services in Staverton and then taking up the AW169 with the same operator.

The replacement type is reported to be the smaller Leonardo AW109E Power. Currently nothing is confirmed but Castle Air operate an AW109 in support of the Cornwall Air Ambulance, that airframe may become available next year when Cornwall acquire its second AW169.

HeliHub has since detailed the report: After a gap of seven months without an aircraft, Magpas will start flying with the Castle Air Leonardo AW109SP GrandNew. The charity had operated the Leonardo AW169 between April 2019 and February 2024, and prior to that an MD Explorer.

Magpas has confirmed to HeliHub.com that they have recently signed a new four year contract with Castle



Air. The operator is currently in the process of re-cruiting (including via LinkedIn) for new HEMS pilots to fulfil the contract. No start date has been given.

Magpas Air Ambulance provides pre-hospital emergency care to patients across the East of England via helicopter and three rapid response vehicles. The new pilots will work alongside Magpas Air Ambulance's existing team of four technical crew members, flying the AW109SP GrandNew to the most seriously sick and injured patients in the region.

Moving to a smaller helicopter than the AW169 previously flown suggests that Magpas has changed their spending priorities. A detailed review of their annual accounts for the year to 30 June 2023 show that the charity spent over £6.6M on their very impressive HQ building and hangar at Alconbury, Cambridgeshire.



Despite losing the use of their helicopter some months ago, Magpas have been using the former helicopter as a backdrop to its fundraising as they seek to build up their funds once again.

Although spending on the new £6.6M base at Alconbury was perhaps the cause of the lack of funds the charity was given little choice when it was forced to give up its base at the former RAF Wyton [Magpas image]

Having previously worked with Specialist Aviation Services (SAS), Magpas needed to sign a new operational contract after Gama Aviation bought selected assets - but not the contracts - from SAS under a pre-pack administration arrangement in December 2023. Ultimately Magpas were unable to agree terms with Gama, and thus paused their flying activities earlier this year until a new contract was in place.

This is the second long-term air ambulance contract won by Castle Air, who also fly an AW169 for Cornwall Air Ambulance. The company also provides their AOC as an interim situation on another aircraft to HeliService UK Ltd, who are actively working with UK CAA towards the issue of their own Operations Certificate. [HeliHub]



North Weald July 1 2024. Two AW169 helicopters from the Specialist Air Services (Staverton) fleet. Both represent a great deal of investment but neither has a customer. The left AW169 is the former Magpas aircraft and the right that formerly used by Childrens Air Ambulance. They both serve as spare aircraft for the fleet now. [PAR]

## MIDLAND

The second Airbus H145 for Midlands Air Ambulance (MAA) was recently added to the UK register, and has been delivered by road from the factory in Germany. It is now being fitted out with a full medical interior by Airbus Helicopters UK at their Oxford base, and after further flight testing will be delivered to MAA in due course.

It is a D3 model with five main blades. Our photo here shows it in temporary external storage at the factory when some recent flooding from the adjacent River Danube provided some logistical challenges for the OEM and a lot of helicopters were parked on the main helipads for a few days.

MAA operates from three separate bases – their headquarters at RAF Cosford in Shropshire, Tatenhill in Staffordshire and a dedicated hangar on the site of the M5 motorway services at Strensham. These cover the counties of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire and the West Midlands. From an initial fleet of three Bo105s, the charity then standardised on H135s and in mid 2021 added their first H145 (a four-blade D2 model) G-RMAA. MAA expect to put this helicopter into service on 1st April 2025 at their Tatenhill base.

Ian Jones, clinical operations director for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity explains: “In 2023, we made the decision to replace our oldest helicopter (which is 18 years old) with a new one.” The aircraft being replaced is an Airbus EC135 that they lease from Babcock Mission Critical Services Onshore Ltd, who the charity contracts to operate and maintain their fleet. This will mean that MAA will then own their entire fleet, two H145s and one H135 MAA tells us that there are no current plans to replace their other H135 with an H145, but the way the UK air ambulance market is progressing, and the MAA’s recent expansion of their Strensham base would certainly set them up for purchasing a third H145 before too long. [Helihub]

**NORTH EAST:** In a continuation of medical and mail trials in remote areas of Britain blood packs have been successfully flown by drone in a series of ‘beyond visual line of sight’ flights, for the first time in the UK.

In a research study to check the viability of flying blood via drone, run jointly by NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) and medical logistics company Apian, ten units of packed blood cells were transported on a 68 km (40 mile) journey across Northumbria’s skies, while an identical ten packs were transported via road.

After assessment, results showed both sets remained viable, with no significant difference in the biochemical or haematological profiles of the blood, which determine if it has maintained quality and can be used for clinical purposes.

Ten separate journeys were undertaken between Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust’s Wansbeck Hospital and Alnwick Infirmary and back again – five by ground, five by air, with each containing identical blood packs.

Due to the need for air space closures to enable the trial to take place the drone flights flew an indirect route out to the coastline, over the sea and back inland for each leg. The complete journey covered 68km and took a total of 61 minutes. The ground vehicle path was 74.6 km long and took 68 minutes. If a permanent set up was arrived at it is envisaged that the flight path would be more direct and therefore shorter. A similar trial for platelets is being planned. [NHS]

*Editor: Currently blood is transported either by NHS van or via volunteer motorcyclists (the so called “Blood Bikes”). In cold weather the latter are obliged to use cars as the blood does not fare well in cold conditions. This suggests that the drone project is both facing adding significant cost to what is often a freely given service and having to ensure that the carrier craft faces the added complication of being equipped with heated storage.*





TAAS: The Air Ambulance Service - accounts for the year to 31 December 2023 have been published - a landmark year in which they celebrated 10 years of Children's Air Ambulance (AA), 15 years of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland AA and 20 years of the Warwickshire & Northamptonshire AA. Additionally, Peta Wilkinson joined TAAS as CEO in October 2023.

On the numbers side, TAAS responded to 1,853 critical care missions by helicopter and a further 1,946 using their two ground vehicles, taking their combined total to 52,274 since launch in 2003. Income grew by 13.7%, rising from £33.6M to £38.2 Million, and the net movement in funds added £4.3M to reserves. The charity accounts show investments (mainly a long-term portfolio managed by professional fund managers) of £12.8M and cash in the bank of £19.9M in the year-end balance sheet.

TAAS currently operates two Leonardo AW169s under the Children's AA banner based at Oxford and Gamston Airports, and two AW109s from Coventry Airport and Nottingham Heliport. All four are operated by Sloane Helicopters [Parapex Media]

WILTSHIRE: The pilots flying with Wiltshire Air Ambulance (WAA) say that the trend of drone collisions is going up and they are seeing more people fly drones over accident sites.

WAA) have issued their accounts and statistics for the year to December 31, 2023. During the year WAA completed 1167 missions (up from 1061 in 2022) although the flown missions figure of 646 was down from 670 and the Critical Car Cars responded 521 occasions, up by a third from 391. Night missions numbered 397 (34% of the total) compared to 329 in 2022 (31%), although these are not split between their Bell 429 helicopter and the ground units that they run.

The accounting year end has been moved from October to December, and thus the reporting year of 12 months to 31 December 2023 is set against the 14 months of 1 November 2021 to 31 December 2022. Despite the reduction in the time period covered, WAA income was up by £3.3M to £7.2 M, almost entirely accounted for by their income from legacies rising by £3.6M. Most other figures are closely comparable from the previous year. The charity has a fund set aside to replace their Bell 429 "circa 2027", and had already set aside £1M by the end of 2022. The WAA board decided in December 2023 to raise this to £3M, presumably linked to their unexpected rise in legacy income. We look forward to finding out more on the evaluation of helicopter types leading to WAA making a purchase decision. [Parapex Media]

## FIRE CANADA

BRITISH COLUMBIA: The Martin JRM Mars a water bomber is something of a rarity. The large, four-engine cargo transport flying boat designed and built by the Martin Company for the United States Navy during World War II was the largest Allied flying boat to enter production from 1942, although only seven were built. Several survived the war and in later years they were used as transports and air ambulances in the Pacific before moving over to acting as water bombers fighting fires in Canada. The last one flying has retired to life in a museum after one last flight after fighting fires for more than 50 years.



They were capable of dumping more than 7,000 gallons of water and fire retardant on a blaze at a time. Skimming the surface of the water, the Mars could refill its tanks with 30 tons of water in just 22 seconds through retractable scoops in the hull.

The last two Mars were acquired from the last operator Coulson Aviation and Philippine Mars is displayed at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Arizona. The last flight was the delivery of Hawaii Mars to British Columbia Aviation Museum, Victoria on August 11. This flying boat made its last ever landing in Patricia Bay just west of Victoria International Airport.



# Unrivaled Mission Readiness. World-class Global Support.

You have to be ready for anything. That's why Bell has been an unwavering partner to law enforcement agencies since 1948, delivering a range of trusted platforms for varied missions. Backed by our industry-leading global support, your team remains ever-prepared for any call that comes your way.



[bell.co/publicsafety](https://bell.co/publicsafety)



## UNITED KINGDOM

**WILDFIRES:** Currently wildfires are not a major problem in the United Kingdom but rising temperatures do suggest that they may be in the not too far distant future.

A team of firefighters, scientists and engineers are working on a project they say will allow swarms of up to 30 autonomous planes to spot and extinguish fires by working collectively using artificial intelligence. Drones piloted by people are already used in firefighting, for example to detect hidden blazes and assess safety risks.

The research is still in the test phase and has not been used on a wildfire, but the team claims it is the first to combine unpiloted drone technology with swarm engineering in the field of firefighting.

The drones that researchers want to eventually use for firefighting would be large twin-engine aircraft with a big wingspan and substantial water-carrying capacity. The drones being used in trials and the now quite familiar Windracers Ultra uncrewed low cost transport. The type has popped up carrying medical supplies and documents, mail to remote areas and even working in the Antarctic on climate change. The latest version (another paint job) is as a fire spotter. The fact remains that the Windracers only carry the equivalent of a few bags of sugar on these trials although they can carry up to 100kg. They are proving useful research tools and they hold more BVLOS permissions than any other operator, Windracers has amassed extensive operational flying time.

Last month a small-scale swarm trial using one of the Windracers along with three smaller test drones took place at Preddanack airport in Cornwall. In one scenario a fire was lit in a bin and the aircraft worked together autonomously to spot it. The team hope the large drones' lifting power will allow them to carry water or retardant as options for putting out a blaze. In this demonstration the drones simply approached the burning bin in a threatening manner to represent a water drop.



Although the promoters of these drones say they are designed to fly without any intervention from remote pilots, they are not autonomous, they need to operate in a flying space where other craft are excluded when fighting fires or delivering Band Aids in these demonstrations. That is rarely mentioned in the media reports.

The move to some form of swarm engineering - making many robots work together in real world applications – is being placed in the care of a number of research partners including the University of Bristol and the University of Sheffield. Windracers production is being developed with the University of Southampton.

The project envisages that a formation of 20 or 30 [of the developed] drones would patrol the skies acting as a deterrent to people looking to start a fire. Many wildfires are started by human activities, such as using barbecues in the open, the careless disposal of smoking materials or deliberate fires that then grow larger, deterring them would be a positive outcome. Time will tell whether the other ignition options including dry, hot weather and drought leading to fires ignited by extreme weather events will fit in with the capabilities of the project. Current drones are relatively flimsy but as we have seen in the Ukraine they are getting more robust every day. If a swarm of drones can do the work more effectively than the solo spotter aircraft and surveillance cameras currently used at lower cost that would be worthwhile.

Not everyone has confidence in the outcome being an economical answer to a clear and growing question. The ultimate aim of creating a BVLOS drone with the capacity to drop a sufficient amount of water or retardant on a forest fire to stop it is a tall order and likely to be prohibitively expensive with current technology.

*Editor: Coincidentally a report came in last month from the Middle East promoting the recently flown EANAN "Heavy Cargo" Drone. Bearing in mind its designation, the developers are stating it can handle a payload of 50kg with a view to increase that to 200kg. Those modest lifting capabilities amount to under 24 gallons (90 litres) of water – there is a long way to go to produce a craft capable of dropping enough water to extinguish a wildfire.*

## UNITED STATES

**CALIFORNIA:** Bell Textron Inc., announced at APSCON 2024 that the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department has signed a purchase agreement for a SUBARU Bell 412EPX to advance its firefighting and rescue operations.

The SUBARU Bell 412EPX combines what many public safety units are looking for – high-altitude power, increased weight capabilities, and a spacious interior. The platform continues to be highly sought-after in the field, especially for those tasked with combating wildfire outbreaks.”

On average, San Diego Fire-Rescue’s Air Operations Unit responds to over 400 emergencies every year, including wildfire and high-rise fire incidents. With the addition of the SUBARU Bell 412EPX, the Air Operations Unit expects to significantly increase its emergency response capabilities in San Diego and the surrounding areas.

San Diego Fire-Rescue has had a 20-year relationship with Bell Textron, and they have been great business partner throughout. Adding the SUBARU Bell 412EPX to our fleet is a significant step forward in enhancing our firefighting and rescue operations.

## SEARCH & RESCUE

### JAPAN

**COAST GUARD:** The Japan Coast Guard has signed a contract for the purchase of two SeaGuardian Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) from General Atomics Aeronautical Systems (GA-ASI), scheduled for delivery in 2025.



This follows JCG’s ongoing Company-Owned, Contractor-Operated agreement with GA-ASI for operating SeaGuardian, which began in April 2022.

*“Since JCG started operating SeaGuardian’s, they have been used for various JCG missions including supporting search and rescue and disaster response specifically during the 7.6 magnitude earthquake early this year near the Noto Peninsula of Ishikawa Prefecture and maritime surveillance during the 2023 G-7 Summit in Hiroshima, and the system has performed efficiently and effectively,”*

said GA-ASI CEO Linden Blue.

SeaGuardian is a medium-altitude, long-endurance RPA system that can fly for 24 hours or more, depending on the configuration.



GA-ASI has strengthened its Maritime Wide Area Surveillance (MWAS) for Japan with Optix+, which gathers information from the SeaGuardian sensors, as well as other data sources, displaying the full picture of surveillance information for its operator. This functionality makes it easy to task and direct its Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) information in real time. GA-ASI's Optix+ software suite rapidly correlates and exploits collected data into an easily shared common operational picture.

*Editor: Costly to buy, recent estimates suggest around \$140M each, which but cheaper to run at about 25% of the cost of a manned alternative.*

**MEDITERRANEAN:** MOAS, the Migrant Offshore Aid Station, based in Santa Venera, Malta has rescued over 200,000 lives around the world since setting sail in August 2014 as the first privately funded Search and Rescue operation in the Mediterranean.

Over the years, MOAS has expanded to different parts of the world, providing critical support in the Aegean Sea, Bangladesh and Ukraine, where it currently conducts medical evacuations for severely wounded patients from the war's frontline. MOAS today marks its 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary, celebrating a decade of impactful humanitarian work across some of the world's most challenging crisis zones.

The launch of MOAS's flagship vessel, the Phoenix, on August 25, 2014, signalled the beginning of a new era in humanitarian aid, combining disruptive thinking, cutting-edge drone technology and a dedicated team of rescuers on a mission to save the lives of people who many were willing to let drown.

Over the course of three years, MOAS rescued over 40,000 people from perilous situations at sea, setting a precedent for civil society's involvement in SAR operations and changing the rescue landscape and the discourse surrounding it.

In 2017, as the Rohingya crisis unfolded in Myanmar, MOAS shifted its focus to Bangladesh, where it established field clinics in refugee camps, delivering 40 tons of essential food aid and providing medical care to over 90,000 people. Nutritional aid and critical medical supplies has been delivered in Yemen, Somalia and Sudan to support communities cut off from healthcare due to conflicts and internal crises.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, MOAS repurposed its programming and launched several humanitarian responses, producing and distributing reusable cotton masks in Bangladesh and Malta. Since the Ukraine conflict outbreak in 2022, MOAS has been at the forefront of emergency medical relief efforts.

## ROMANIA

**FRONTEX:** On the evening of June 30, 2024, eight border police on board the maritime patrol vessel MAI 3064 "Kewatec" were directed by the crew of an Italian helicopter to a contact some 12nm south of the island of Lampedusa.

Shortly after they intercepted a small boat, drifting in Italian territorial waters, with many people on board, establishing that it was a wooden pescador, without a flag, overloaded with migrants.

Since the hydro-meteorological conditions were not favourable, the decision was taken to take all 79 people onto the Romanian border police vessel, although the numbers exceeded its nominal capacity for survivors.

The 70 men, 5 women and 4 children, picked up over several exhausting hours were found to be from Egypt, Pakistan and Syria.



The MOAS rescue vessel Phoenix operated a Scheibel UAS from the deck on SAR missions in the Mediterranean for a short period. [MOAS]

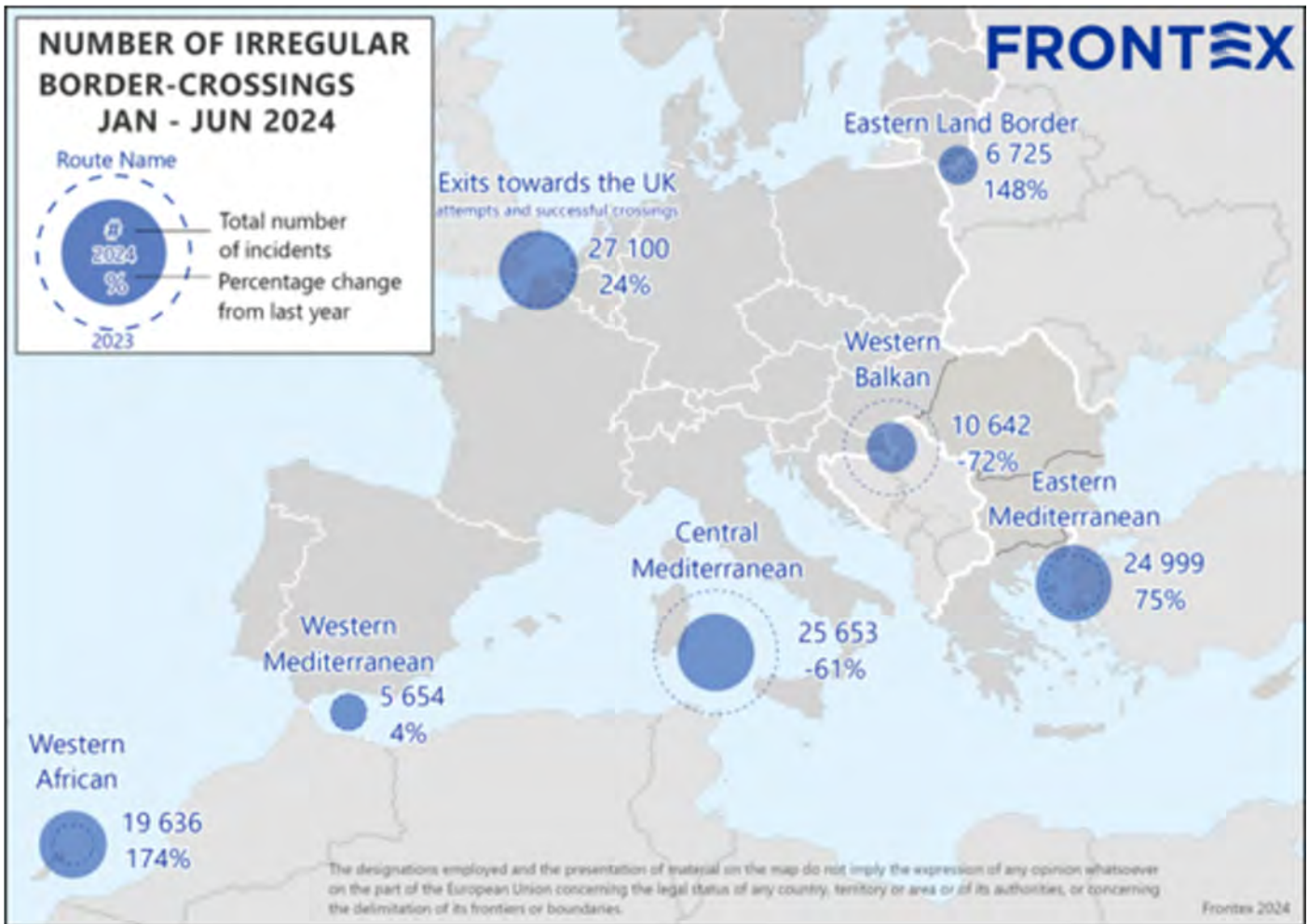


## Parapex Media

Marketing, Social Media Management, Website Design, Press and PR  
dedicated to the Aviation Industry

[www.ParapexMedia.com](http://www.ParapexMedia.com)

A chart showing the most recent change in the flow of migrants from Africa and Asia to Europe.



In July of this year Frontex state that ‘Irregular border crossings fall one third in the first half of 2024’, but percentages can be misleading. A large percentage increase in a small number will result in a number which is still relatively small. The 175% increase in crossings, attempted and successful, from Africa to the Canaries, is still smaller than the number of crossings from France and, presumably, Belgium, to the UK in the same period, 19,636 v 27,100, in the first 6 months of 2024.

The table shows that in June 2024 there were 5,280 exits towards the UK (from mainland Europe). Contemporary UK Home Office numbers state that there were 2,824 landings in June 2024. So, more landings than preventions, 2,824 v 2,456. But those numbers undoubtedly relate only to detected movements. Anyone making an undetected landfall may never be counted.

Unfortunately, the Home Office, together with Frontex, don’t make it easy, trying to interpret numbers from the Home Office, ‘Small boat arrivals - last 7 days’, together with, ‘Weekly summary of small boat arrivals and preventions’ and now a ‘news release’ from Frontex, covering all the EU borders for 6 months. Probably enough to drive the average analyst to drink. [TC]

## UNITED KINGDOM

**MIGRANTS:** The head of the National Crime Agency (NCA) has called for an asylum system that works “quickly and effectively” to discourage migrant Channel crossings.

Graeme Biggar described these perilous journeys as a "persistent and high-volume threat", as he argued that "a deterrent needs to be part of the response".

When asked about the new Labour governments scrapping of the Conservatives' Rwanda policy, Mr Biggar said: “We have never taken a view on or set out a view on Rwanda as a particular part of that deterrent, that’s been implied by others that we have but is not the case.

“We have consistently said that a deterrent needs to be part of the response. We haven’t commented on Rwanda. Deterrence can take lots of different forms.”



Meanwhile, the brand new Home Secretary, **Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP**, appointed Secretary of State for the Home Department on July 5, 2024 when she was elected as the MP for Pontefract, seeks to add 100 'Specialists' to target the people smuggling gangs.

The International Organisation for Migration, which records Channel crossing deaths as part of its Missing Migrant Project, estimates 226 people including 35 children are missing or have died after attempting the crossing as of January this year. According to the French coastguard, there have been at least 19 deaths of asylum seekers attempting to travel to the UK by boat this year, including nine since the start of July.

NCA's threat assessment said tactics from people smugglers which see migrants "wading out to boats or transferring from taxi boats", has "increased the likelihood of fatalities".

## ILLEGAL MIGRATION ACROSS THE ENGLISH CHANNEL - FACTS AND FIGURES INTRODUCTION

### Analysis

| Year. | Days (1-15 August).  | Migrants landed. | Boats | Average (migrants/boat) |
|-------|--|------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| 2019  | 11   | 97               | 11    | 9                       |
| 2020  | 13   | 1,115            | 90    | 12                      |
| 2021  | 7  | 2,182            | 70    | 31                      |
| 2022. | Figures distorted by an influx of over 12,600 migrants from Albania. |                  |       |                         |
| 2023  | 6  | 2,058            | 39    | 53                      |
| 2024  | 7  | 2,163            | 40    | 54                      |

The immediate conclusion from this simple analysis is that in this criminal led operation the boats are getting much bigger and they're carrying many more migrants. The bigger inflatable boats, those built in China and imported into Europe through Turkey, would seem to be much less seaworthy and more reliant on good weather. In the 3 years, 2021, 2023 and 2024, crossings took place on just half of the available days in the first 2 weeks of August, but in each year over 2,000 migrants were landed in the UK. By comparison, in 13 days in 2020 it took 90 boats to transport 1,115 migrants, an average of just 12 migrants per boat. In 2024 less than half the number of boats, just 40, transported 2,163 illegal migrants who were 'rescued' mid-Channel by the Border Force and the RNLI. [TC]

***A fuller, continuation, article on the current position of migrant flows in the English Channel appears from page 40 of this issue.***

## INDUSTRY

**CNC Technologies**, has announced they were selected to provide law enforcement mission suites for two new Tennessee Highway Patrol Bell 429's and one new Minnesota State Patrol Bell 429. The Tennessee Highway Patrol aircraft will be equipped with full mission suites including microwave video downlink equipment that is compatible with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) infrastructure for mutual aid operations throughout the state. This contract comes after CNC Technologies' successful completion of the TBI Pilatus PC12 downlink upgrade and the construction of seven ground receive sites across the State of Tennessee. Completion services on both 429's will be provided by Bell Piney Flats for delivery in late 2024. The Minnesota State Patrol Bell 429 will also receive a full law enforcement mission suite with completion services by AeroBrigham LLC in Decatur, Texas. AeroBrigham recently completed a Cirrus SR22 fixed wing aircraft for the State Patrol to complement their existing fleet of aircraft. The Minnesota Bell 429 is expected to be completed in early 2025.

Canadian avionics manufacturer, Anodyne Electronics Manufacturing Corp. (AEM), is granted a new Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) for its modern MTP136D P25 forest service radio. The Transport Canada awarded STC #SH24-21 is a significant milestone for AEM, as well as for operators providing aerial firefighting services using the industry workhorse H125 (AS350) aircraft.

AEM's new STC covers the installation of the MTP136D for all aircraft in the H125 (AS350) series. With the radio in extremely high demand since its launch in late 2023, the certification will help speed up the process of updating many operators' fleets with the latest in aerial firefighting communication technology. Designed with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and aerial firefighting operators in mind, the MTP136D is a Project 25 Phase 1 compliant VHF FM solution for digital and analogue communication on

all channels across the 136MHz to 174MHz frequency band. It's easily integrated for tactical systems, platform upgrades, and is a plug-and-play replacement for existing legacy radios.

The MTP136D is on track toward formal acceptance by the USFS and is already shipping and being installed on aircraft throughout North America.

Call the AEM sales team at 1-888-763-1088 or email [sales@aem-corp.com](mailto:sales@aem-corp.com) to place your MTP136D order today. Don't forget to ask about the P122 and P132 avionics console upgrades for the H125 (AS350).

AEM is a wholly owned subsidiary of SMS Canada Corp, part of the Structural Monitoring Systems plc (ASX Code: SMN) companies ([structuralmonitoring.systems](http://structuralmonitoring.systems)). [www.aem-corp.com](http://www.aem-corp.com)

Teledyne FLIR Defense, part of **Teledyne Technologies** Incorporated, unveiled its UltraFORCE 380-HDc imaging system at the Farnborough International Air Show in the UK during late July. The new long-range airborne surveillance solution is not subject to International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), easing shipping and freedom of movement to customers outside the United States.

The UltraFORCE 380-HDc delivers superior high-definition multi-spectral imaging in a compact, low-profile package. Full 1080p resolution across its visual, thermal, low-light, and shortwave infrared (SWIR) cameras makes the 380-HDc an optimal solution for airborne reconnaissance, patrol, and search and rescue missions. UltraFORCE 380-HDc also features an advanced laser rangefinder and pointer, allowing users to covertly 'light up' targets or points of interest and to coordinate operations with observers wearing night vision goggles or similar devices. Intelligent, automated operation optimises tracking and continuously indicates size, location, speed and distance of multiple targets.



With **Vertical Aviation International** (VAI) embracing the entire vertical aviation industry, the organization is opening its annual Salute to Excellence Awards program to welcome new participants. This expansion includes a significant addition: a new award that pays tribute to the late Harold Summers, a figure whose legacy and spirit continue to inspire maintainers in the vertical flight industry.

The nomination period for the [2025 Salute to Excellence Awards](#) is open now through September 30, 2024, with no extensions. VAI will announce the award recipients in early 2025. Membership in VAI is not required to submit a nomination or to receive an award. Help recognize excellence throughout the vertical lift industry by submitting a nomination for a person or team whose work you respect or admire.

Now featuring 11 award categories, some of the awards acknowledge superior efforts by individuals and several are open to teams and companies. VAI believes it is only a matter of time before the Salute to Excellence Awards program receives nominations for people working in the advanced air mobility sector.



**People Solutions**

- Transformation Management
- Crew Resource Management
- Organisational Development
- Psychometrics
- Talent Management
- Coaching
- Facilitation

*'Helping you to realise and release the talent potential that sits within your organisation, developing your people and ensuring that you safely thrive and fly'*  
David Howell, Director

[www.ableandrush.com](http://www.ableandrush.com)



Effective maintenance surveying and vandalism patrol of the rail networks has been undertaken from the air in recent years but now Italy has launched trials of an innovative unmanned diagnostic system designed for use in railway infrastructure.

The tests are being conducted on the Bologna – San Donato section, where facilities of the operator RFI, responsible for the country's railway network, are located. The primary function of the system is to monitor the technical condition of railway infrastructure and to detect unauthorized persons on the tracks.

An important aspect is the reduction of risks related to vandalism and theft at railway facilities.

The system is planned to be operated during periods when train traffic on high-speed lines is temporarily suspended, minimizing the impact on passenger schedules.

The system's technical capabilities include both autonomous operation and remote control by an operator. This allows it to be adapted to various operating conditions. Built-in LiDARs, infrared, and optical sensors ensure high accuracy and reliability in monitoring.

The maximum speed of movement reaches 200 km/h, and autonomous operation is possible for up to four hours without interruption. [RFI—[Railway Supply]



France has ordered two DHC-515 Firefighter aircraft from **De Havilland Canada** via a government-to-government contract. The purchase includes spare parts, training, and maintenance support, although the contract price was not revealed. The DHC-515 is an upgrade of the well-known Canadair firefighting aircraft that already serves France. It has a water-carrying capacity of 6,137 litres

This acquisition of newer water bombers by France is the result of ongoing cooperation between Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC), De Havilland Canada, the European Union's Civil Protection Mechanism (rescEU) and its Member States to supply the EU with the Canadian water bombers. RescEU is supporting the acquisition of 12 DHC-515 aircraft for Greece, Croatia, Portugal, Italy, Spain and France. CCC is Canada's government to government contracting agency. [via Helihub]



The **New York Power Authority** has received a waiver from the Federal Aviation Administration granting NYPA license to conduct fully remote unmanned aircraft operations beyond the visual line of sight of observers in any unrestricted airspace, or Class G, without prior approval.

The approved waiver expands the Power Authority's ability to use drones to monitor and inspect its transmission, generation and canal assets throughout the state.

The waiver allows operators to conduct fully remote missions without the requirement for the pilot or an observer to see the unmanned aircraft, and without the use of airspace monitoring systems, such as radar.

The Power Authority's expanded ability to operate drones will primarily be used to inspect transmission assets and canal waterways.

The waiver was obtained with the help of Skydio, a U.S. drone and software manufacturer providing equipment and advisory services. The waiver authorizes operations through 2028 and is specific to Skydio drones.

More than 115 NYPA employees are now trained as drone pilots, up from 40 last year. To improve the safety and efficiency of its utility operations, NYPA is investing more than \$37 million in its drone program through 2028. [PublicPower]

The **European Business Aviation Association** (EBAA) has purchased the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) interest in the European Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (EBACE). With the purchase, EBAA has become the sole producer of all future editions of EBACE, including EBACE2025. Financial terms of the purchase agreement were not disclosed.

In the UK mobile (cell) phone operators are resisting plans to ensure their networks have power during extreme weather or cyber attacks amid fears of prohibitive costs.

The suppliers, **BT, Vodafone, Virgin Media and O2m** would be required to provide at least an hour of battery back up power at all their mobile mast sites under new guidance being formulated by the regulator Ofcom.

The operators have rejected the new rules which are expected to cost the industry £1.8Billion. The expectation that they would carry that level of expense alone would be disproportionate. Another smaller provider '3' called the costs prohibitive.

Meanwhile the plans to progressively delete all landlines (based on copper wires) in the UK goes ahead. This digitising will mean that only mobile phones will work in the case of power failure – and then only if the masts remain powered.

*Editor: If the system were to suffer a major and long term failure the population will simply have to relearn how to contact others by long lost skills like letter writing and personal contact.*



As part of West Malling’s Social Values Initiative focus, **Teledyne FLIR Defense** recently presented the Kent SSAFA office with a financial contribution to continue their vital work with our Veteran neighbours. The SSAFA is the UK’s oldest military charity, serving heroes and their families since 1885. Dedicated to the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, the British Army, and the Royal Air Force, including anyone who has completed National Service, the SSAFA provides a support network for Veterans and their families in need of physical or emotional care.



The organisation works to train welfare advisors and volunteers to work with individuals to determine their needs, and then create a plan for access and fulfilment. Whether they’re facing debt, addiction, mental health challenges or feelings of isolation, the SSAFA provides valuable and personalized support to help them through it. Their volunteers and operations span throughout the UK, with one such office near Teledyne FLIR Defense’s West Malling office

Teledyne FLIR Defense in West Malling is proud to kick off this connection with their local SSAFA affiliate and explore opportunities to assist those assisting our Veteran community.







The independent EASA Part 21J Design Organisation **SPAES** has completed the design and manufacture of five medical racks for MD902s operated by Heli Austria. The medical rack is located in the passenger compartment between two rear facing seats, and securely holds a Defigard Touch 7 unit, a Weinmann Medumat Standard<sup>2</sup> unit, and a BOSCAROL BSU212 OB 10000 FM MSU unit. This setup ensures that critical medical devices are easily accessible during flights, while still offering flexible configuration options for other device layouts to meet specific operational needs. The project was completed within SPAES' own EASA Part 21J Design Organisation and Part 21G Production Organisation. [SPAES]



## ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

**2 July 2024 Schweizer 300C PR-MLI** operated by the Public Security Dept of the Brazilian state of Par ra. Helicopter substantially damaged in emergency landing on football pitch after the aircraft experienced a loss of power and a drop in the main rotor speed. 1 POB, not injured.

**15 July 2024 Yak-52 UR-ODS** Ukrainian Civil Air Patrol was destroyed by Russian forces according to an official statement to Russian State News Agency TASS. However, it is unknown as to whether the aircraft was destroyed on the ground, or shot down by long range air defence systems. This type has been repurposed by Ukraine for destroying Russian drones. One of the key features of the war in Ukraine has been the ingenuity of Kyiv's forces and their ability to turn non-combat equipment into offensive weapons. An example of that happened over Odessa when a Ukrainian Yak-52 was filmed chasing down a Russian Orlan 10 reconnaissance drone.

**20 July 2024** (revised date and information) **Leonardo AW119Ke PR-CBG** Corpo de Bombeiros Militar of the Brazilian state of Goi as. The aircraft took off from Aruan a aerodrome bound for Aragar as aerodrome to carry out an air patrol flight, with three crew members and three passengers on board. During the flight, engine power was lost and a forced landing was carried out on the banks of a river. Press images show the aircraft partly submerged, and reports indicate the pilot suffered minor injuries [Parapex]

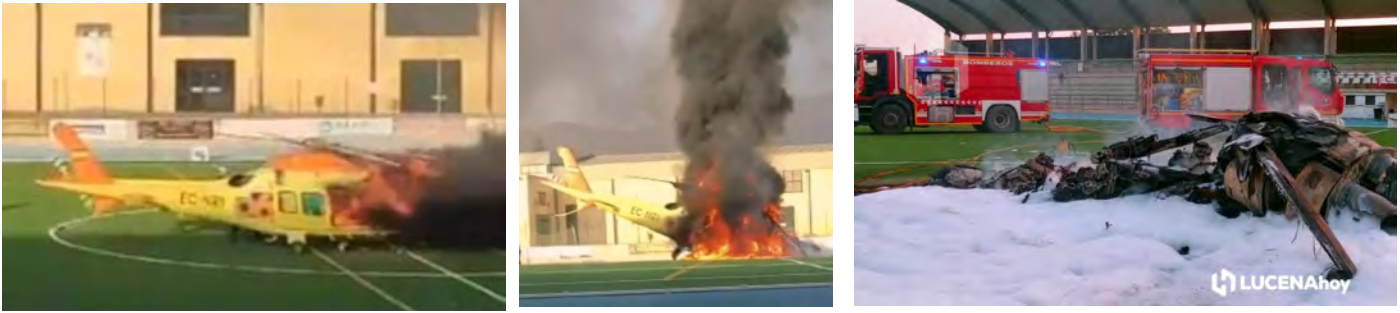
**28 July 2024 Aerospatiale SA316B Alouette AS9211** Armed Forces of Malta. Rolled over on take-off and substantially damaged. No injuries to 4 POB

**31 July 2024 Air Tractor AT-802A Fire Boss N1546H** fire fighting operated by Aero Spray Inc in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, USA. Departed Electric City, WA for Coeur d'Alene, ID. Struck a wire.

**1 August 2024 MD Helicopters MD530F N530JL** Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. Operating from North Las Vegas Airport aircraft suffered vibration and made an emergency landing. No Injuries or damage.

**7 August 2024 Eurocopter AS350B2 Ecureuil HL9184** Korea Forest Service performing a pest control flight on chestnut trees, clipped a power line and crashed near Hongpyeong, Gojeon-myeon, Hadong-gun, South Gyeongsang province, South Korea. The pilot was injured and was taken to a hospital and the helicopter received substantial damage. [ASN]

**8 August 2024 Airbus EC135P2+ JA824H** Air ambulance operated by Hirata Gauken Aviation, Chuo Ward, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan for the national Doctor Heli network. A safety investigation was instigated after a post-maintenance test flight at Kobe Airport. After being given ATC clearance to a company helipad, the helicopter landed on the main runway. [Parapex Media]



**10 August 2024 Leonardo AW109 EC-NRI** Air ambulance of Avincis Aviation España SA operating for the 061 emergency services, experienced an explosion in the forward cabin when preparing to take-off for Reina Sofía Hospital, Córdoba and caught fire at the football field of a sports stadium in Cabra, Córdoba, Andalusia, for unknown reasons. The patient suffered serious injuries and the four other occupants minor injuries and the helicopter was destroyed. Burned out [ASN/Media]

**12 August 2024 Britten-Norman BN-2B-27 Islander HK-2822.** Air ambulance of Servicios Aereos Especiales (SAE), Colombia. Aircraft believed on an ambulance mission took off from Guaymaral Airport and a few minutes later crashed into trees near Yerbabuena, Chía, Cundinamarca, when attempting a forced landing. Nose wrecked and outer wings detached but no major fire. The four occupants received minor injuries and the aircraft was written off. [ASN]

## UNMANNED

In recent years, Latin American drug networks have increasingly adopted sophisticated methods to evade detection, including the use of unmanned vessels and chemical transformation of cocaine. The International Centre for Research and Analysis against Maritime Narcotrafficking (CIMCON), based in Cartagena, Colombia, but made up of personnel from several countries has publicised insights into the emerging trends.

The 2024 update reflects a significant shift in trafficking methodologies, driven by advances in technology and tactics akin to fourth-generation warfare. Notably, the use of unmanned marine vehicles is on the rise, especially among Colombian and Mexican groups. These vehicles, capable of carrying small quantities of drugs, often go unnoticed as they operate alongside traditional vessels like fishing boats and speedboats. Despite their currently limited scope, the increasing range and capacity of these unmanned vehicles suggest they may become a more prevalent method for drug trafficking.

Another critical development is the innovative chemical transformation of cocaine to evade detection. Criminal organizations are converting cocaine into various forms, such as liquids or blending it with other substances like salt, oils, lubricants, and even fruit, to disguise the drug's chemical components. This complicates detection.

There is a trend towards less violent behaviour among groups drawn together from many nations as they apparently see that violence could hinder business. European crime organizations, such as the Italian mafia, have long recognized the benefits of operating under the radar and avoiding conflict. This approach is increasingly being adopted by traditionally violent Mexican and Colombian cartels, who are seeking to maintain business continuity and minimize visibility. [Channel 16]

### SANDBOX

As reported in the section under UK law enforcement aviation, the UK Civil Aviation Authority has launched a Sandbox project to cover a variety of emergency services drone projects. The content is not entirely new, it includes the NPAS BVLOS and the NHS drug transportation flights in drones, and even deliveries by such as Amazon but it gives the theme a general handle.

It enables interested parties to apply to join the system to trial technology and concepts. Joining is not automatic and those taking part in sandbox trials will have been selected, it is not a free for all.

As part of otheir work to enable the safe integration of drones operating in BVLOS mode the CAA developed an the air space policy concept using Temporary Reserved Areas (TRA) of airspace, a regulatory sandbox.



Further information about how the sandbox trials fit in with the CAA's airspace policy concept and airspace modernisation strategy are available via a non-too gripping briefing called "UK CAA Integration Sandbox Briefing" on the UK CAA website.

*Editor: It is interesting to note that among the specific projects this sandbox is investigating are 'electronic conspicuity' and 'sense and avoid' two subjects that the drone and pilotless industry told us were all but solved a decade ago. You may recall the ASTREA BAE Jetstream G-BWWW (or your mother may have told you about it) that a dozen years ago was on the cusp of fully autonomous flight. It was never confirmed and we might presume it never happened. The aircraft still exists, parked up at Cranfield, but the owners BAE Systems will not talk about it. In those days fully autonomous flight was at least a decade away. Here we are a decade later and, guess what, it is still probably still a decade away. Maybe much more.*



## BELGIUM

A drone successfully completed a 4 km test flight between Residential Care Centre De Zon in Bellegem, managed by Zorg Kortrijk, and General Hospital Groeninge in Kortrijk. This flight, conducted beyond the visual line of sight (BVLOS) of the pilot, marks a significant milestone in the TETRA project 'Medical Drone Supplies' (MEDROS), led by VIVES University of Applied Sciences.

The MEDROS project aims not only to explore but also to implement the possibilities of drone technology for transporting medical goods within the Flemish healthcare sector as well as to integrate it into the entire healthcare logistics chain. This flight provided evidence that the rapid and efficient exchange of medical samples is possible through drones. Additionally, project partner KU Leuven is conducting a comparison between the quality of blood samples transported by drone and those transported by road.

The drone flight partially took place within the limits of Kortrijk-Wevelgem Airport, where strict safety regulations apply to drone flights. This is the first time that a drone has flown beyond the pilot's line of sight in this airport's perimeter without the need to interrupt other air traffic.[SkeyDrone].

## MOVE ALONG THERE

It has been a difficult few weeks for the new left leaning Labour government. They won their way into power on July 8 and have noted disquiet and public protest on the street almost ever since.

When she was an opposition Labour MP Rachel Reeves, now the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the new government reportedly said in September 2016 "Britain could explode into rioting if immigration is not curbed after Brexit." Prophetic words it seems. There were no riots back in 2016, or indeed right through to August 2024. Unfortunately the idea was right but it was not until the new government took office and it had nothing to do with Brexit.

The incoming government cancelled the threat of deportation of illegal migrants to Rwanda and decided not to act against many of those already in the country. Already they appear keen on reversing Brexit by stealth. In a matter of a few short weeks it does not seem to have gone down too well (but the previous administration was no better so perhaps I am being unfair).

Before it had an earthly chance of analysing the make up of the rioters involved (there were quite a few grannies and housewives evident) the Fire Brigades Union condemned the rise of far-right riots and racist violence in cities and towns taking place across the UK last month.

**Matt Wrack, Fire Brigades Union general secretary, said:** "Firefighters were among the first to respond to the appalling stabbings in Southport last week. The FBU sends its thoughts and condolences to all those affected, especially the loved ones of the three young children who tragically lost their lives, and we applaud the bravery and professionalism of the firefighters who attended.

Unfortunately he added "It is clear that the organised far right has used these tragic events to mount a deliberate campaign of racist violence and intimidation. The attacks on mosques, hotels housing migrants and other targets in recent days have been shocking.

## NO ONE WILL NOTICE

New government, new ideas. Although the new Labour Government (I guess termed 'communist' by such as Donald Trump) is set to add hundreds of new 60 metre plus high wind farm poles and minimum 36 metre electricity pylons to the British countryside in the near future they have issued an edict that limits other, apparently less intrusive, poles. The government has warned broadband providers that it will bring in legislation to prevent the installation of telegraph poles, average 8 to 10 metres high, if they fail to limit their use.



Apparently its all in answer to pressures from 'Middle England' worried about the number of wooden telegraph poles being installed. I am not sure whether they have noticed what an onshore windfarm pole does to a view – yet!

The 23rd and final Sikorsky VH-92A Patriot "Marine One" variant of the S-92 was delivered to the US Marines last month. The fleet is primarily destined to serve as Head of State transport to the US President and VIPs. To help them along there are also several remaining VH-3D Sea King's, VH-60N White Hawks and even a dozen Bell-Boeing MV-22 Osprey tiltrotor planes and that is without counting the Boeing 747 and 757 derived special airliners and dozens of armoured cars of all kinds.



Contrast that with the much more limited largesse heaped on the Heads of State in Europe – even the Kings and Queens of the UK manage to get around in just two Sikorsky helicopters and a few Rolls-Royce cars.

## CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR

A remotely piloted American military surveillance and reconnaissance airplane is making its first appearance in England on a temporary deployment. The RQ-4 Global Hawk landed at RAF Fairford on Thursday, U.S. Air Forces in Europe – Air Forces Africa said in a statement the following day. The maiden flight to England is part of the command's efforts to expand operations alongside NATO allies, the statement said. The plane will "conduct operations through international and allied airspace," The RQ-4 flew nearly 24 hours from Sigonella, Italy, traversing much of Eastern Europe and Finland before flying west across Sweden and Norway and down into England.

Clearly the perfect craft to undertake the BVLOS mission for the UK emergency services it is perhaps unfortunate that the type – introduced in 2001 – costs a cool \$218M each. [Stars and Stripes].



# PEOPLE

Teledyne FLIR Defense announced the winners of the 29th Annual 'Vision Awards' at the APSCON 2024 Conference in Houston. The Vision Awards are presented to members of the north American airborne law enforcement community who have best demonstrated use of thermal imaging systems in carrying out their missions, whether pursuing suspects, conducting search and rescue efforts, or saving lives.

The awards are divided into four categories, including the FANG Award for operations involving a K-9 support team.

This year's winners are:

## Vision Award First Place

*Michigan State Police*

Pilot: Sgt. Cole Martin, Tactical Flight Officer (TFO): Trooper Joshua Maskey



## Vision Award Second Place

*Prince George's County Police Department (MD)*

Pilot: Mr. Bo Corser, TFO: Corporal Michael Waters

## Vision Award Third Place

*San Diego Police Department*

Pilot: Officer Joe Waggaman, TFO: Officer Toby Terranova

## Life Saver Award

*Hillsboro County Sheriff's Office (FL)*

Pilot: Master Sheriff's Pilot Emanuel Feller, TFO: Sheriff's Pilot Thomas Fisher

## Hot Pursuit Award

*King County Sheriff's Department (CA)*

Pilot: Deputy Josh Sweeney, TFO: Deputy Alex Paul

## FANG Award

*Houston Police Department*

Pilot: Senior Police Office Matthew Little, TFO: Police Officer Sean Ofield

K-9 Handler: Senior Police Officer Joseph Rodgers, K-9: Rico [www.teledyne.com](http://www.teledyne.com).



# BIGGER BOATS CARRYING MORE MIGRANTS

FROM  
PAGE  
31

Before 2021 the boats used to transport migrants across the English Channel were quite small, albeit well constructed and more seaworthy, with each carrying, on average, around 12 migrants.



AFP



AFP



PAR File

Today, the boats are getting bigger, they are badly constructed, less seaworthy and, at the same time, the risks, to the migrants, are much greater. According to the French authorities, some 25 migrants are known to have perished whilst attempting to cross the English Channel by boat in the first 8 months of 2024; several of these have died from crush injuries in boats filled to beyond capacity. In 2023 there were 12 reported fatalities. The current record for the number of migrants crossing the Channel in one boat is 84. By comparison, on the 2 August 2020 just 3 migrants crossed the Channel in a single boat. Moreover, in past years, many of the crossings in smaller boats were at night, now the larger, less seaworthy boats travel during the day.

## NEW TACTICS - BY THE PEOPLE SMUGGLERS

A new tactic, by the organised criminal groups, by the people smugglers, is to launch their inflatable boats in rivers and canals, then motor along the coast to selected beaches to embark their passengers. The French describe this pick-up as 'water taxi'. However, this, in turn, begs the question, how difficult can it be, with persistent air patrols, with light aircraft, to spot and report a large inflatable boat from the air, on a river, or a canal, or motoring along the coast to pick-up 60, or more, passengers waiting on an isolated beach, a beach near Wimereux for example?



Wikipedia

How difficult can it be, with persistent air patrols, with light aircraft, to spot and report a large inflatable boat from the air, together with 60, or more migrants on a beach in northern France?

Unfortunately, the figures from the UK Home Office, published every 24 hours, tell only half the story. Each day we're informed of how many migrants have been landed in the UK and how many boats have been recovered. At the same time, no one doubts the courage of the French police officers when trying to stop a large group of 60 plus migrants, many of them armed with knives and sticks, from setting sail in a large inflatable boat. Nevertheless, these migrants, those who are determined to reach the UK at all costs, know that the Border Force, together with the RNLI lifeboat service, will meet them in the middle of the English Channel, on the median line, and then take them to Dover, to complete the second half of their journey in relative comfort. Why aren't these boats intercepted by the Border Force on the French side of the median line and then landed at Calais rather than at Dover?



Home Office/Border Force.

Although the European Union may support a policy of 'open borders', the Schengen Agreement, the UK still has the right to defend its own borders, preventing unauthorised, illegal entry by migrants crossing the Channel from France to England





**No one doubts the courage of the French police officers when trying to stop a large group of 60, or more migrants armed with knives and sticks.** AFP

If France cannot control its borders with Belgium, Germany and Italy, a failure of the European Union Schengen Open Borders Agreement, this does not mean that the UK should not defend its own border, preventing unauthorised, illegal entry into the UK. With hindsight the British government should have secured the country's Channel border in 2018, when the first 299 migrants crossed the English Channel in small boats. Then, in November 2021, following the largest loss of lives in one incident, when at least 27 migrants perished when their inflatable boat deflated near Calais, the result should have been a more robust Anglo-French agreement to 'stop the boats' with, if necessary, joint patrols of the French beaches, with more 'boots on the ground'. Once the cross-Channel route is closed there will be no reason, no 'pull factor' for migrants to cross France to set up camps close to Calais and Dunkirk.

The second half of this story is in France, on the northern beaches between Dunkirk and the Baie de Somme, where the weather will deter many crossings. In the first 2 weeks of August there were just 7 days with light winds and a calm sea. Also many boats will be intercepted and destroyed during their journey across Europe. But, how many migrants are turned back on the beaches of France, as they are in Belgium, and how many boats, together with their outboard engines are destroyed on the same beaches? The information currently available, weekly from the Home Office, is, to say the least, ambiguous. For example, in a recent Home Office summary, for the week ending 11 August 2024, we are informed that, in France, 829 migrants were prevented from crossing the English Channel. Also, 29 events were prevented. In the same week, 1,172 migrants were 'rescued' by the UK Border Force from 20 boats and landed at Dover. However, in the following week, the week ending Sunday, 18 August, according to the Home Office, the French prevented more migrants from crossing the Channel, 952, than were landed at Dover, 746.

After a 7 day period, 20- 26 August with zero crossings, due to adverse weather with strong winds in mid-Channel, the weather quickly improved to give light winds and a calm sea. On the 27 August, 526 migrants were landed from 8 boats. The next day, 28 August, a further 614 migrants were landed at Dover from 10 boats. In just 2 days, with good weather, with the landing of 1,140 migrants, the annual total shot past 20,000 to reach 20,434. The weather is so critical that the days when migrants will cross the Channel in large inflatable boats can be predicted, with a high degree of certainty, several days in advance. This gives the security services the time to plan their response, on land, at sea and in the air. With good weather and in the absence of a robust Anglo-French response, the number of illegal migrants crossing the English Channel will continue to increase.

By Home Office definition, 'migrants prevented' are those migrants who are prevented from leaving France, or those who return to France. Events prevented include boats that are prevented from leaving France, or return to France, together with finds of general maritime equipment and, also, the arrest of 'facilitators' linked to small boat crossings. It does not include the general dispersal of migrants. Most importantly, it does not include the number of inflatable boats, together with their outboard engines, that are destroyed each week, by the French police.



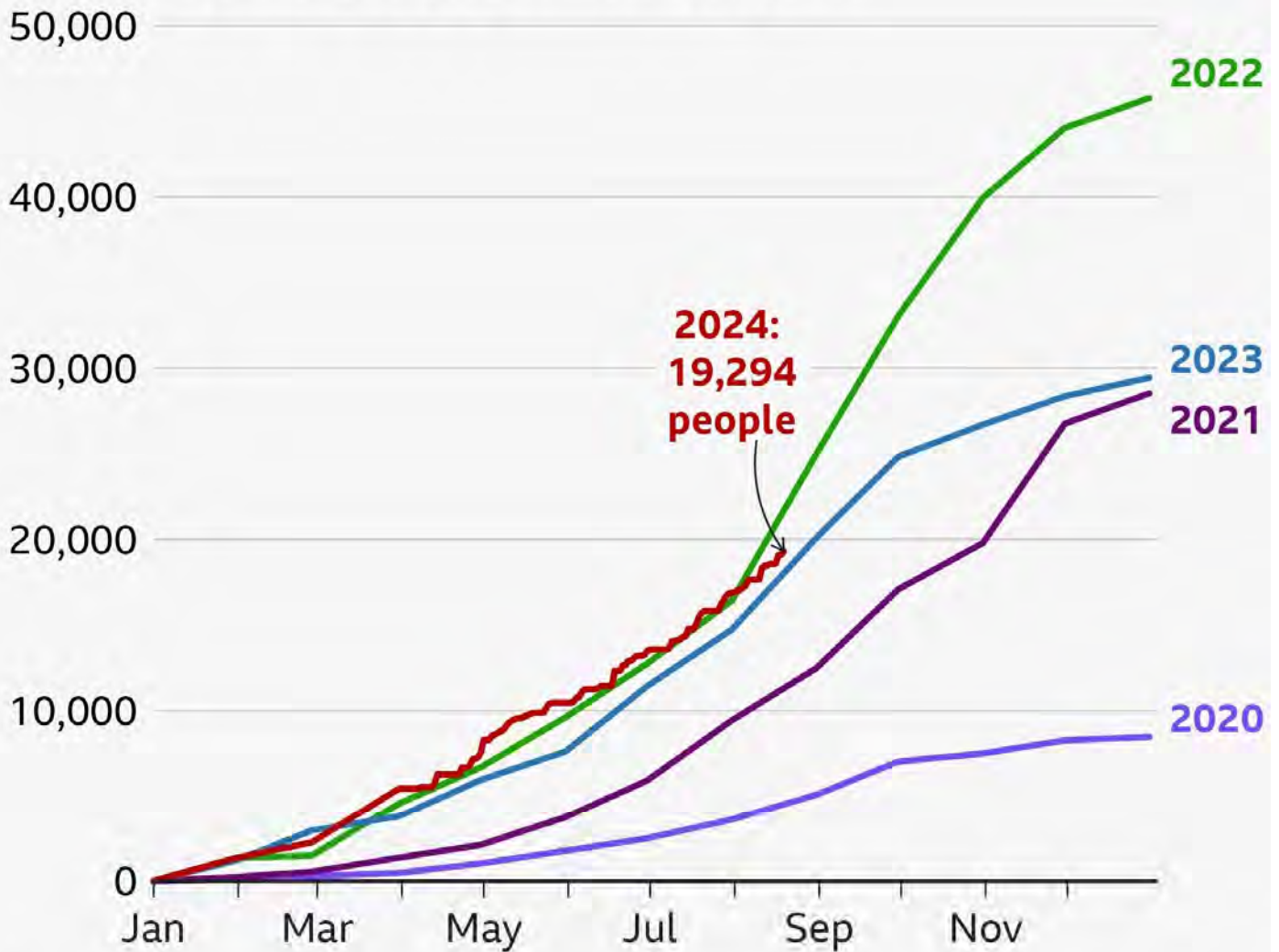
## CONCLUSION

After paying the French government for more police officers and for better coordination between the British and the French, why are the numbers crossing the English Channel going up when they should be going down? If the current trajectory is maintained then the number of migrants crossing the Channel in 2024 will exceed 30,000 with some statisticians estimating 40,000, or more. The current trajectory is paralleling that of 2022, a record year when 45,774 migrants crossed the Channel. In 2023 the total was 29,437, in 2021 it was 28,526. The current annual total for 2024, at the 28 August, was 20,434.

If the Home Office doesn't have the full facts to hand then how is it even possible to know if the £480million, transferred to France in March 2023, payable over 3 years, (a total of £680million paid to France since 2018) is value for money, is it money well spent? Surely, it would be better to pay the

# People crossing the English Channel in boats

Cumulative total people detected by year



Note: Data to 31 March 2024 is monthly totals, more recent figures are daily totals. Some data from the latest week may be unavailable

Source: Home Office/Ministry of Defence, latest data 19 Aug



French more, if more is needed, for more police officers and even better Anglo-French cooperation, rather than face the ongoing financial burden of £8million per day to accommodate asylum seekers in hotels across the UK. A further question, for the Home Office, is, with a new government and with a new Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, will the proposed Border Security Command, to coordinate the activities of Immigration Enforcement, MI5, the Border Force and the National Crime Agency, now, at long last, “smash” the people smuggling gangs and, finally, stop the boats?

James A Cowan MBE

## EVENTS

**18-19 September 2024 The Emergency Services Show, NEC, Birmingham United Kingdom.** Europe's industry-leading, award-winning annual event tailored to the specific needs of emergency services personnel. Across two days, unite with 16,000+ fellow blue light professionals, source 10,000+ solutions from top-tier brands and businesses, share key skills and knowledge to bolster emergency response, and foster meaningful cross-sector connections with colleagues and peers. [www.emergencyuk.com](http://www.emergencyuk.com)

**24-25 September 2024 Helitech Expo. ExCel, Docklands, London, United Kingdom.**

After a plummeting presence by real aeronautical exhibitors, this year Dart Aerospace is going to be there. As with most years the coffee shop also fills up with aerospace people who are 'not there' and next month there may be a few words and pictures in PAN due to the editor not being there either. As the advertising states.... 300 exhibitors, 150 seminars and 4,000 visitors. They have not achieved that in years and most speakers relate to drones so if you attend with drones in mind you may well be reasonably happy. [www.helitech.co.uk](http://www.helitech.co.uk)