

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Police Aviation News

©Police Aviation Research

Number 129 January 2007

IPAR



PAN – [POLICE AVIATION NEWS](#) is published monthly by
INTERNATIONAL POLICE AVIATION RESEARCH
7 Windmill Close, Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 3BQ UK
Main: +44 1992 714162 **Cell:** +44 7778 296650 **Skype:** Bryn.Elliott
Bryn Elliott **E-mail:** editor@policeaviationnews.com

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LAW ENFORCEMENT

AUSTRALIA

QUEENSLAND: A police chase that led to the death of a young girl at Redcliffe led to politicians in the Opposition to renew earlier calls for the State Government to fund a police pursuit helicopter to add to an existing police air fleet of fixed wing aircraft primarily operated in the transportation role.

In return members of the legislature have called the calls callous in that they were made into a helicopter issue less than 24 hours after the girl lost her life. The claim was that a single police helicopter would not have been operated near Redcliffe in any case, police have made it clear that such a resource would primarily be employed in the elsewhere in the State.

These primary areas identified are over the CBD [Central Business District of Townsville, Queensland], Logan City, Torres Strait or the Gold Coast in the west of the state. Redcliffe is in southeast Queensland. [news.com]

CUSTOMS: The Australian Customs Bell 412 EP helicopter is back in service in Torres Strait after undergoing a 43 day long major overhaul.

Australian Helicopters Pty Ltd Bell 412 EP, VH-RHJ completed its first 5000 hourly inspection which required the overhaul of the main rotor transmission, main rotor head and blades, tail rotor gearboxes, flight control components and repainting at the Heliwork facility Redcliffe airport, Brisbane. [Australian Helicopters]

CANADA

CALGARY: The high profile HAWCS law enforcement helicopter operation has been attracting a fair bit of negative publicity in recent weeks.

FRONT COVER: Set against a typical winter snow-scene this Air Green AgustaWestland AW139 represents an important new type in the EMS market place. The type is now being built in the USA in the expectation of major sales into that region. [AW image]

With sales of the AW139 continuing to rise across the emergency services market [police, EMS and SAR] and some important deliveries being made later this year it is perhaps appropriate to feature yet another AW product as a front page!

P.S. Please do not tell those that constantly see PAN as a purely Eurocopter publication!

The local police commission has been looking at reports that HAWCS has had to turn down calls due to staffing shortages after two of the four pilots quit over pay and conditions to work for the STARS air ambulance. The commission fought hard to get a second helicopter to make ensure citizen safety in the city and now sees a need to have them flying.

For the moment Calgary Police Chief Jack Beaton remains upbeat as the operation still only has the first helicopter to support. The new additional machine has yet to be delivered.

However it seems informed sources are suggesting that all is far from rosy – it is said that the helicopter has been operational less than seven days last month and officials are keeping the details to themselves. [Calgary Sun]

CARRIBBEAN

ST. KITTS & NEVIS: In a recent speech Junior Minister, Hon. Dwight Cozier has stated a number of crime fighting measures that include the acquisition of a helicopter.

In order to keep to a zero-tolerance mandate on drugs and narcotics a Canine Unit will be established in Nevis and a provided with a role adapted vehicle, in addition there will be a trained Bicycle Patrol unit in Charlestown and a Police Helicopter unit which would operate out of St. Kitts but which would patrol Nevis on a random basis to ensure narcotics prevention.

In addition the Coast Guard are to get a vessel to patrol the waters of Nevis to thwart the landing of narcotics.

At a more mundane level the minister talked of various works at existing police stations; in the Charlestown Police Station they want to re-establish finger-printing capability, plans to extend and finish the Gingerland police station, build a new station at Cotton Ground and repair and renovate the Newcastle police station.

Cotton Ground Police Corps which are presently being accommodated at Ozzy's Guest House after being moved from a wooden building infested with wood lice and rats. [SKNV]

Ed: With that level of backworks to the basic police infrastructure there seems little real chance of a helicopter appearing in the short-term.

CHINA

SHANGHAI: The Shanghai Public Security Bureau has announced its intention to purchase three new helicopters.

The aviation squad will be included in the security arrangements set up for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games – nine preliminary soccer matches will be held in the city. Two years later the team will also operate over the 2010 World Expo.

China currently has seven police helicopter operations operating twenty helicopters from three bases. The first police helicopter in China was an Enstrom EF280FX Shark c/n 2062 put into use in Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei Province in 1994. [Shanghai Post/Media]

Ed: At which point it is worth highlighting two apparently conflicting moves recently announced by Eurocopter. On the one hand there was a report that Eurocopter intend to expand production in the region and then within hours it was reported that the company believed that significant growth in China was being severely hampered by the level of air traffic control restrictions applied by the military. Currently even the police have to apply to launch a mission in most if not all regions and recently it has been said these applications have been to the local general. With China nominally embracing the style of police air support operated in the UK and USA this clearly represents something of a problem and it would be unworkable over say the security of a major event like the Beijing Olympics next year. Clearly EC believe that the restrictions will fall away in the short term or their investment would be less.





EUROPE

FRONTEX: Having been rebuffed by a critical Libyan Government in September it was better news for the Frontex anti-immigration operations as last year drew to a close.

The Italian Interior Minister Giuliano Amato has announced that Libya is showing more willingness to allow Frontex sea patrols aimed at curbing illegal immigration to operate near its shores.

Libya will join forces in the joint-sea patrols on two conditions, namely that patrols close to the Libyan coast are undertaken by Malta and Italy with Libyan collaboration.

Libya and other African countries pledged greater cooperation with the European Union to reduce migration and agreed to some joint border security measures at a recent EU-African migration summit.

The summit, of more than 50 ministers from the European and African Union countries ended in late November. European development funds would be used to address the issue with the European Union offering \$1.9M to Libya to back an Italian project to monitor its border with Niger.

At a mid-December meeting EU leaders reached agreement on reinforcing Frontex, which will co-ordinate more thorough EU patrols off the coasts of Malta and in the central southern Mediterranean region in 2007. [Malta Media News - Agenzia Giornalistica]



KUWAIT

Police Aviation Services has confirmed that it has been awarded the Police Air Wing engineering contract for the Ministry of Interior in Kuwait. The Air Wing operates two EC 135 and two AS 365 Dauphins on a round-the-clock basis out of Kuwait City.

The new contract which will last for four years involves a significant number of staff providing a full range of maintenance, logistics and technical services. [SAS]

LITHUANIA

The Lithuanian Border Guard has now taken delivery of the three Eurocopter helicopters it had on order. The EC145 and two EC135's routed from Germany via an overnight stop at Gdansk in Poland to the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius last month. [Rotorhub]



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UAE

With Agusta-Westland reporting its Middle East sales are up 15% this year it is not surprising that the company has been linked to helicopter sales to the police services in the region. Although it seems the contract has yet to be signed Abu Dhabi police have been linked to the sale of eight AW139 helicopters for 2007 delivery.

AW has signed a deal with Abu Dhabi Aviation which will see a spare parts centre set up and, possibly, a completion facility where helicopters will be assembled.

It never rains in the desert we in the Northern Hemisphere think we know. Bursting that little bubble of erroneous information was the weather conditions surrounding last months Dubai Helishow! Rain falling onto the desert failed to soak away immediately resulting in the airport being inundated by flash floods and the consequent temporary closure causing visitors diversions to other airports

Out in the region police rescued more than 70 people stranded in the rain in various emirates over a three day period.

The Air Wing Department rescued 23 people who were stranded in Al Worai'a valley in Fujairah. A helicopter was despatched to the valley and a search found five UAE nationals stranded in the middle of the valley, and they were rescued. The helicopter returned and rescued another 18 people who were stranded in the same valley during what were described as 'bad.' The helicopter had to fly low between the mountains to reach the five people who had set up their camp in the middle of the valley.

Elsewhere rescue teams rescued 50 people from 15 vehicles stranded in the Al Qahfy area of Oman. Another vehicle that was buried in the valley was also rescued.

UNITED KINGDOM

CHILTERN: The Bedfordshire Police Authority has still to decide on whether it is to base the tri-force helicopter at RAF Henlow.

One of two EC135T2 helicopters operated by the Chiltern Consortium remains based at Luton Airport, it is shared by Thames Valley, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire police forces.

The airport authority reneged on a prior arrangement to re-site the police helicopter after work had been done on a new on-airport site because of changes in their forward plans. Another factor against keeping the helicopter at Luton is the airport is prone to fog during the winter months which has on many occasions resulted in the aircraft being grounded.

RAF Henlow has long been seen as a favoured alternate choice because of the good fuel and maintenance facilities within a secure airfield site.

Although this remains a very urgent requirement any decision will have to await another meeting by the Police Authority in the New Year.

Ed: For the last five years RAF Henlow has been part of a three airfield group [Brampton/Wyton/Henlow] and operates as a ground-training base specialising in electronics. The Station is the home to the Directorate of Engineering Interoperability and houses the Joint Arms Control and Inspection Group, HQ Provost & Security Services (RAF), the RAF Centre for Aviation Medicine and No 616 Volunteer Gliding School which operates Vigilant T1 motor gliders. The breadth of the users should ensure the retention of the airfield by the RAF for some years.

EAST MIDLANDS: Late last month an EC135P2i c/n 524 was registered G-EMID, thus confirming the identity of the second Pratt & Whitney powered EC135 for UK police use.

The airframe is currently at Oxford with McAlpine Helicopters awaiting role conversion with a delivery later this year. [CAA]

LONDON METROPOLITAN: Although they are not due to operate their new Eurocopter EC145/BK117C2 helicopters for a matter of months, since the end of November the Metropolitan Police were reported pilot training across the UK. Reports of them flying ILS approaches into Southend Airport on the east coast using G-MPSB were followed by others of the London EC145s flying into Devon & Cornwall's base at Middlemoor. The airframe is painted but has yet to receive the role equipment fit so this was primarily a pilot orientated activity to move the unit from VFR to IFR operations in the Spring of 2007. IFR flying was given up when the Bell 222 fleet was given up in the 1990s.

It is reported that this activity will not be confined to the one helicopter, aircraft use will rely on availability as the three airframes are being prepared for service at Oxford. [RH]

NORTH WEST: With its BN-2 Islander aircraft G-CHEZ still in with Police Aviation Services having its new Wescam SX-15 sensor turret belatedly fitted in place of the former LEO 4 Cheshire Constabulary have been operating rotary wing from their base at Chester Airport, Hawarden/Broughton, North Wales.

The helicopter - which is expected to remain in use until later this month - was the former Birmingham Eurocopter AS355F2 G-WMPA but now regularly seen in service as a maintenance back-up across the UK. This PAN image was taken in mid-December of the helicopter being flown over the City of Chester.

Meanwhile the demise of immediate plans for an 'All Wales' police service the previous idea of a closer cooperation between North Wales [Eurocopter EC135] and Cheshire have slipped firmly back into favour.



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UNITED STATES

ARIZONA: In Tucson the lack of a mechanic is keeping police pilots from operating their air fleet as they would like.

The city has three helicopters, but one is not flying because the Police Department's two helicopter mechanics can't keep up with maintenance and repairs to keep the seven pilots occupied. The department's 40-year-old, Cessna 172G fixed-wing aircraft is grounded for lack of funds.

Another helicopter mechanic would allow the department to increase flying time from the current of about 3,200 hours per year between 1600 and 0400. The current manpower and financial constraints are hampering long term plans to operate in daylight hours.

Currently Tucson operate three Bell 206B.3 JetRanger's N304PD c/n 4525, N305PD c/n 4586 and N306PD c/n 4588. [TPD]

CALIFORNIA: Nearly \$1M is shortly to be turned over to the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department to renovate a Huey helicopter for heavy-lift rescue operations.

Members of the Sheriff's Council voted 18-2 to donate \$950,000 for the project, a huge chunk of the \$1.12M the nonprofit group has in the bank.

The council's commitment to fund the helicopter renovation dates back about two years, when it earmarked the first \$200,000. Funding became bogged down in an expensive litigation so it was late 2005 before another \$750,000 was authorized – only to see the funds frozen by court order until September.

The 1968 vintage Bell UH-1H currently sitting idle at a repair facility in Northern California was donated to the local department by Jefferson County, Colorado several years ago. Over a period of nine months the Huey will be converted to a Super Huey, capable of carrying more than five tons, with a larger engine and a rescue hoist. It will also be equipped with FLIR and a searchlight.

The department has two smaller Bell helicopters it uses for patrol and law-enforcement purposes, but those can't carry enough weight for rescue operations. [Santa Maria Times]

FLORIDA: The 23 years old Citrus County Sheriff's Office aviation unit has upgraded its fleet with a new Eurocopter AS350B3 AStar.

Amid some local opposition the new AStar [N479JD c/n 4059] has joined an existing fleet of a Piper PA34-200T and two Vietnam era Hughes OH-6A helicopters [N473SD and N474SD].

FLORIDA: Lake County Sheriff's Aviation Division fleet based in Tavares is also hoping for an upgrade using federal money to cover the expected \$1M plus cost.

The department currently has three remaining Vietnam War era helicopters after one crashed in June in a field near Schererville during a training flight.

Last month Department pilots checked out an MD600N, which touched down in the parking lot near the Sheriff's Department but they are looking at several different models. The MD retails at about \$1.3M without any role equipment so Sheriff Roy Dominguez has detailed officers to explore ways to secure Homeland Security grants to pay for the new helicopter.

[Post Tribune]

Ed: The Lake County's Office owns a number of helicopters and airplanes. Their oft repeated philosophy being that by having four helicopters they can have three in bits and yet still fly one on emergency calls. The economics of that would not find favour in other countries.

IOWA: As far back as July 2001 some officials in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, were wondering if the police helicopter programme was worth it. Since the city obtained its first Army surplus OH-58 Kiowa in 1973, people have wondered in the face of evidence that the helicopters

are stopping crime and saving lives.

There has been a regular pressure on the City Council to cut the helicopters out of the budget. Around five times a night the helicopter is called in. The city has pilots available 24 hours a day, and the unit is available to other Iowa cities on an as-needed basis.

As recently as May 2006 the budget of the half a million dollar annual helicopter operation was once again under strong scrutiny. One answer was to try and defray costs by getting funds from surrounding towns and cities but by November the local media were reporting that an appeal to other communities and counties to help support the helicopter had not generated many pledges. Cedar Rapids is asking for a contribution of one dollar per resident. Recently Johnson County supervisors said plain no but Hiawatha and Marion were still looking at the request. Cedar Rapids City Council members told local TV reporters a lack of regional support could hurt the chances of continuing. [TV9]

KANSAS: The Wichita Police Department's helicopter -- one of officers' most sophisticated anti-crime tools -- soon will be grounded for up to three months. The department acquired its current helicopter, an MD 500E, in May 2003. The four-seat aircraft replaced a pair of ageing two-seaters.

The helicopter, in use for more than three years, must undergo its first major scheduled maintenance.

Depending on parts availability the job will take between one and three months to complete. Renting a temporary replacement engine to keep the helicopter aloft while the original drive train is serviced wouldn't be viable because no money has been budgeted for that.

The overall time frame is affected by the war in Iraq because military aircraft have first priority in getting parts. In October, maintenance that was supposed to take one week spanned three because of a problem in the air frame that required sheet-metal work.

Placing a positive angle on the work the unit has pointed out that the timing of the work -- during the cold season -- is favourable in that the helicopter can sometimes be expected to be grounded by bad weather in any case.

Thanks to a Homeland Security grant, the helicopter will have improved night-vision equipment fitted.

Unless the department gets an unexpected windfall, it won't be able to put a second helicopter into service until 2008 at the earliest.

MICHIGAN: The Monroe County Sheriff's Aviation Unit doubled its size in late 2006 and now includes two donated Army helicopters. The newest addition, a 1970 OH58C Kiowa [70-155616 '61G'] will not fly, it will remain grounded and be used strictly for parts. The Kiowa was flown in from Alabama.

In 2006, the sheriff used more than \$172,400 in drug forfeiture money for repairs and other expenses to maintain the first helicopter [N580SD 69-16334]. About \$120,000 of that amount was needed for an engine overhaul, a one-time cost.

The annual cost of maintaining the helicopter - including fuel, maintenance, insurance and storage - is expected to be in the \$50,000 range.

Since Kiowa arrived it has been equipped with an FLIR. The \$50,000 cost was picked up by the Office of Monroe Narcotics Investigation (OMNI). Other equipment and services, such as the search light and a paint job, also were obtained through gifts or grants.

MISSISSIPPI: A second surplus aircraft was acquired for Jackson County in 2006 -- and that caused a furore although the costs were met by existing funds. When the sheriff's department was alerted that the Department of Defense was releasing 50 surplus helicopters, they moved on the opportunity to acquire a helicopter as a backup or for parts.

The condition of the helicopter was better than expected and it will be used as a flying unit. The only cost to the county, Byrd said, is paying Mississippi's military surplus \$8,000 to handle the acquisition.

The current helicopter logged just 200 hours in the last year on SAR, homeland security at

certain times over Chevron, Northrop Grumman Ship Systems, First Chemical, Mississippi Power and the Port of Pascagoula and drug interdiction.

They have two deputies on staff who are certified pilots - Capt. Ray Bates and Deputy Jim Harrington, have military backgrounds and work for the sheriff's department full time. They receive regular pay and if they work over, they would receive time and a half. The county's first helicopter was acquired in 1993. The annual cost to maintain and operate the helicopter is between \$7,000 and \$8,000 - funded solely through drug forfeiture funds and that covers insurance, hangar fees and fuel costs.

County supervisors voted against accepting a \$67,503 estimate from a Panama City, Florida, company to recondition and do maintenance work on the DoD surplus helicopter.

The helicopter has been stored in a hangar at Trent Lott International Airport for the last six months because mechanical problems have made it unsafe to fly. Plans to repair it using seized drug money have been put on hold because county officials had been unable to find a company to repair it.

After they put out a tender for bids there was just one bid submitted. Four companies failed to submit price quotes for the work. The sole estimate from Coastal Helicopters Inc. of Panama City worried some of the Board of Supervisors. [Mississippi Press]

NEW MEXICO: In December 2006 Albuquerque Police said they have the wrong helicopter. The \$1.5M Eurocopter EC120B is not now considered suitable for the city's high elevation and summer heat. It can fly only 30 minutes at a time during average summer months. The city had sought a helicopter that was quieter than two old ones because residents complained about the noise. When the Air 1 debuted in 2001, police officials said it was a state-of-the-art craft that could stay in the air for 3½ hours without refuelling. [New Mexican]

Ed: This seems to be a classic case of someone not reading the specification sheets prior to contract signature. Define the mission.

NEW YORK: The New York Police Department tests its officers for drugs regularly and the ramifications for those found to have positive tests are severe. The NYPD uses hair DNA tests for drugs, rather than urine tests. Urine tests detect drug use a few days prior, but the hair test can indicate illegal drug usage months earlier.

Three months ago the PD suspended Officer Jon Goldin an NYPD helicopter pilot, praised for heroics and post-September 11, 2001 effort, after he tested positive for cocaine.

Goldin, a 15-year veteran in the aviation unit who saw flying as the core of his very existence, was suspended without pay after a hair-sample drug test came back positive.

Now the officer is fighting the threat to both his flying and police careers. Goldin's attorney said the level of cocaine recorded in the sample was not minuscule. Goldin later took a urine test at a private lab and passed. It has now been suggested that the positive result could have been caused by the officer's relationship with a woman who had used cocaine.

A department trial date has not been set. [NYP/IPAR]

NORTH CAROLINA: Tucked away in a hangar at Dillon's Aviation at the Pitt Greenville Airport sits the newest addition to the Pitt County Sheriff's Office fleet. It is a 1968 Bell OH-58C [70-16950 '54A'] from DoD Surplus.

Two Army officials flew the Bell into Greenville from Fort Rucker, Alabama in late August.

A little routine maintenance, up-to-date insurance coverage and securing the skills of a pilot round off the "to do" list before its first flight.



Several local pilots, including one who flies for Pitt County Memorial Hospital's EastCare air ambulance, have expressed interest in volunteering their services.

The Bell will be used an average of about 15 hours a month costing about \$1,500 — mainly for the 30 gallons of fuel it burns an hour. Routine upkeep and monthly flying costs will be covered by about \$50,000 in funds from drug and other seizures made in the county yearly. Dillon's Aviation has offered to store the helicopter at no charge and provide discounted maintenance.

Pitt-Greenville Airport is a public airport located two miles north of the city of Greenville, Pitt County, North Carolina. It is mostly used for GA but is also served by one commercial airline

PENNSYLVANIA: The Pennsylvania State Police has announced the Aviation Patrol Unit Seven is now operational at the Altoona-Blair County Airport flying one of the department's Bell 206 LongRanger helicopters. The helicopter is used to assist all state police facilities and other state, municipal and federal law enforcement agencies.

The primary service area for the APU VII is Blair, Huntingdon, Centre, Cambria, Clearfield, Bedford, Fulton, Juniata and Mifflin counties. Previously those areas were covered by aviation units in Harrisburg, Latrobe and Montoursville.

The nine counties being served by the new unit total 6,594 square miles. The crew from APU VII will be able to reach nearly all of that area within 30 minutes.

TEXAS: The Texas Department of Public (DPS) has completed the modification of their nine AS350B2 aircraft for night vision goggle operations. Texas DPS contracted Aviation Specialties Unlimited (ASU) of Boise, Idaho to complete the modification. The STC modification of all the aircraft was completed simultaneously within a two week period.

Texas DPS also purchased (14) ITT Model F4949 Pinnacle, AN/AVS-9, the most advanced aviator night vision imaging system (ANVIS) under the same contract.

Besides the (9) Eurocopter AS350 aircraft, Texas DPS operates (7) single engine Cessna and a Commander 1000 fixed wing aircraft.

The Texas DPS provides air support coverage over more than 250,000 square miles from nine designated bases across the State of Texas [ASU]

UTAH: They are usually big boy toys, but now at least two police agencies in the Salt Lake Valley are using remote control helicopters to investigate car crashes.

The Salt Lake County Sheriff's office is using a remote control helicopter to investigate major crashes. They take numerous pictures of the crash from 30 or 40 feet up, then feed that into a computer program.

The small helicopters carry a still camera, video camera, or an infrared camera. [CBS]

WASHINGTON: Snohomish County sheriff has warned outdoor enthusiasts that their rescue aircraft is out of service. The sheriff's Bell UH-1H Huey helicopter, used primarily for search-and-rescue missions, has been grounded for the winter. The 1970 Huey logged unexpected hours during the Election Day flooding, pushing the aircraft's maintenance schedule ahead at least two months. The sheriff's smaller, Bell OH-58 Kiowa helicopter will remain in service, but it isn't designed for rescue missions.

The sheriff's office recently requested about \$150,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to overhaul the Huey's engine.

That maintenance was scheduled to be done this winter, but the extra flights during November accelerated the need for the repairs. The helicopter made about a dozen flights to rescue people trapped by floodwaters, mainly in east Snohomish County. In the days following the floods, the crew flew county and state officials over the river valleys to assess damage to homes, levees and roads logging about 30 hours in the air, racking up about a \$9,000 fuel bill. The helicopter crew generally flies about 15 hours during a busy summer month. The helicopter is likely will be grounded until spring.

AIR AMBULANCE

CANADA

Helijet International Inc. has been selected to negotiate a \$15 million, long term contract to operate a dedicated Learjet air ambulance for the British Columbia Ambulance Service [BCAS], under the Ministry of Health.

The Bombardier Learjet 31A will be dedicated to routine patient transfers, seven days a week, while based at Helijet's YVR South Terminal hangar. The aircraft is presently at Helijet's maintenance facilities undergoing modifications for its January start date.

The new Learjet is Helijet's fifth medically equipped aircraft to enter service. The Richmond-based carrier presently operates two fixed-wing King Air 200 turbo-props and two Sikorsky S-76 helicopters exclusively for BCAS. The Airevac Program transfers patients when it is medically desirable and economically advisable using a mix of dedicated aircraft, commercial, charter and armed forces aircraft.

Helijet International is a Canadian-owned company, and is North America's largest scheduled helicopter airline, as well as British Columbia's largest air medical service provider.

Helijet is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year and has won numerous awards for outstanding customer service, as well as its safety record. This fall, Helijet will offer up to 176 flights each week between Vancouver, Victoria and YVR, with passengers able to book online at www.helijet.com.



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LIBYA

AgustaWestland has announced that the Libyan Red Crescent has purchased five A119 Koalas. The sale of the A119 Koala for Emergency Medical Service (EMS) in Libya marks further success for the aircraft in this important market sector, having secured more than 100 orders from customers around the world.

The Libyan Red Crescent's main activity is providing medical services through its network of health centres and clinics, but also participates in disaster relief and health education activities in Libya.

The A119 Koala is powered by a single 1,002 shp (747 kW) Pratt & Whitney PT6B-37A engine confers excellent performance even in the most demanding hot and high conditions, making it ideally suited for the Libyan climate where summer temperatures regularly rise above 40C.

NEW ZEALAND

The Life Flight Trust (New Zealand) Westpac Rescue Helicopter has announced that after two years of researching through a number of agencies [including PAN] they have recently taken delivery of a factory re-conditioned FLIR MKIII system which has now been installed on their BK117B2.

The local police and the NZ Air Force are going to help them with training for their new operational tool.

The operation provides air rescue services to the greater Wellington region including Wellington, Porirua, Kapiti, Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt, Wairarapa and the Marlborough region of the South Island. www.lifeflight.org.nz [Dave Greenberg]



SOUTH AFRICA

The Eastern Cape Health Department issued an urgent invitation to tender for an air ambulance helicopter service over the recent holidays, as no helicopters were available to evacuate critical patients from accident scenes.

Since December 1, regarded by emergency services as the start of the festive season, there was no air ambulance service available in the former Border and Transkei regions.

The invitation for tenders came after pressure from the Eastern Cape Emergency Services Committee.

At the heart of the matter was a series of bureaucratic bungles starting in June when the Health Department issued an invitation to tender for an air ambulance service.

The process was postponed and another contract was issued to Ntinga Aviation. That contract was cancelled over compliancy issues with the East London-based AV8 helicopter company slated to provide the service but without the signing of a contract.

When AV8 proved unable to provide the service a number of times they pointed out the lack of contract to cover the cost of a dedicated ambulance service with a helicopter on standby at some R286000 per month. At the time his helicopters were requested to perform ambulance services they were away on chartered flights. [Despatch]

Ed: A number of operators tendered for the contract the final choice was AV8 but three days after Christmas [six days after the contract was supposed let] a newspaper was bemoaning that the deal had still not been done to the satisfaction of AV8, nor was a machine ready, and the region remained without an air ambulance.

UNITED KINGDOM

GENERAL: At a meeting of the nations' 16 independent air ambulance charities in Cheltenham last month delegates voted unanimously for current Chairman David Philpott to continue in the role for a further 2 years.

Philpott had been planning to step down so that someone else could bring their influence to bear on the development of the Association of Air Ambulance Charities, but was persuaded to stay by the unreserved support of his colleagues.

In the coming weeks, the Association will be formally adopting a constitution and setting up advisory groups, which will report to the board. It is expected that by the spring of 2007 the Association of Air Ambulance Charities will have formulated coherent policies on funding, operational matters and clinical preferences. www.airambulancecharities.co.uk

Ambulance bosses were ready to send an air ambulance 75 miles to a crash victim, despite a paramedic crew being on a meal break just four miles away.

A motorcyclist suffered a broken arm in a collision with a car in a Weardale village but because crews are not paid for meal breaks, the RAF scrambled a helicopter from RAF Boulmer in Northumberland. It was only because Mr Hollis was able to call one of the nearby crew direct, that the helicopter was recalled.

The North East Ambulance Service Trust (NEAS) is involved in a long-running dispute with union leaders over payments for staff during meal breaks. Currently paramedics on assigned meal breaks are not disturbed.

The negotiations are trying to find a solution within the remit of a national agreement. Despite attempts to find an alternative arrangement for the meal break period nothing has been agreed. Ambulance crews want extra payments if they volunteer to forego guaranteed meal breaks. The national agreement states crews should work 37.5 hours a week.

NOW: Police Aviation News
Skype VoIP: bryn.elliott

COUNTY: The control centre for the County Air Ambulance in the West Midlands region has relocated to the Black Country.

It had been based at RAF Cosford in Shropshire since 1991 but officials said 999 calls can be monitored more effectively in Brierley Hill.

The new centre has computerised maps which improve co-ordination between air ambulance and land ambulance crews.

The service covers Staffordshire, West Midlands, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Herefordshire and the East Midlands. The helicopter will remain at RAF Cosford. [BBC]

DEVON: The North Devon based Devon Air Ambulance [their second aircraft] has reached its first landmark by flying its 1,000th mission. The mission was not in Devon, it flew just over the border into Cornwall, as the Cornwall Air Ambulance was unavailable on December 7th. The 1,000th mission was a call to a farmer in his 40's who had been kicked by a cow. He was conveyed to Derriford Hospital.

The North Devon Air Ambulance is flying as many missions pro rata as the Exeter based helicopter. This means the service is able to help twice as many people in need as before. The DAAT have what they claim are 'exciting plans' for the North Devon Air Ambulance. Having raised the level of interest they are now keeping the details close to their chest.

DORSET & SOMERSET: A Honda CR-V is helping to save lives across Dorset and Somerset as part of the region's air ambulance service.

Teaming up with the Bolkow 105 helicopter, the car will provide emergency rapid response across the two counties – transporting casualties to the right specialist hospitals to meet their needs. Paramedics from the airbase at Henstridge Airfield, near Sherborne, will drive the CR-V to 999 emergency calls in the very local area and when the helicopter is grounded due to bad weather.

Usually one of the least heard about air ambulance services is to have a new Eurocopter EC135T2i helicopter to replace its current Bolkow. Airframe c/n 0517 was registered G-DORS last month. Delivery to Bond Air Services in Staverton from McAlpine Helicopters, Oxford is expected to take place in the first quarter of 2007 but no delivery date to the charity operator has been announced. [RH/MA]

EAST ANGLIA: The trustees of the East Anglian Air Ambulance (EAAA) are consulting with the charity's supporters and other stakeholders about the possibility of using both its helicopters [a BK117C1 and a BO105DBS5] on a permanent basis across the region while, in addition, bringing this vital service to Bedfordshire, a county which currently has no air ambulance.

Currently, Anglia One, the main East Anglian air ambulance, serves a population of 2.5M in the three counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire and the charity can only afford to operate Anglia Two, its second aircraft, in support at busy times. Additional funding from Bedfordshire would enable the charity to run both helicopters all the time with the aircraft being sited at opposite ends of the four counties. The two helicopters would then serve a population of 3.2M, representing an overall increase in air ambulance provision for everyone in the four counties. The charity would also have access to a back up aircraft which would be used when either of the main air ambulances were in for scheduled or unscheduled maintenance.

The EAAA has received some funding from the Cambridgeshire/Bedfordshire border for some time and has responded to missions in the county when requested. The proposal under discussion is essentially a way of formalising this arrangement and of extending the



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area from which the charity can raise funds.

GREAT NORTH: More than £250,000 has been raised for the Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) in the last year and this will see the return of the air ambulance that once served Northumberland. A new base has been identified at Otterburn Camp near Ponteland to the west of Newcastle which is better suited to serve rural north Northumberland than its previous home on the coast at Blyth.

Great North was at one time a three aircraft operation and the Blyth aircraft [an AS355F1] was their first. When GNAAS hit a severe funding shortfall in spring 2005 in the wake of the Tsunami charity appeals the operation was reduced to just one aircraft, a BO105 in Cumbria was stored and the AS355F1 disposed of.

At the time of the financial difficulties other air ambulance operations flourished and grew so it appears to have been a purely local difficulty – possibly based upon the style of fundraising then in place locally.

In November last year, the charity launched a campaign – The Race for Flight – to encourage people to donate on a regular basis and now £40,000 is being pledged per month to keep GNAAS in the air.

The type of aircraft being brought in is reportedly a leased BO105 [or a 'Baulko 105' as one Hexham paper would have it!]. The charity has commented that the aircraft will need upgrading in about a year.

SCOTLAND: The new air ambulance operations in Scotland continue to raise protests in the country. Residents in Orkney, off to the north of the mainland, want the return of their old air ambulance service, which could reach them four times faster than its replacement.

Loganair lost the contract to Gama Aviation after 38 years, the new seven-year, £40M con-

tract replaced four fixed-wing planes stationed across Scotland with two EC135 Eurocopter helicopters from Glasgow and Inverness and two pressurised fixed-wing King Air 200c aircraft from Aberdeen and Glasgow.

Loganair had an Islander aircraft based in Kirkwall [Orkney] which provided a far faster service in the order of 15 minutes even in bad weather. Being over 100 miles away the helicopters are typically taking over an hour. [Media]

SURREY & SUSSEX: The Air Ambulance Trust which already provides an Air Ambulance for Kent, has taken a step closer to introducing a new service in Surrey and Sussex. Kent Air Ambulance Trust has selected Medical Aviation Services Ltd to provide an MD Explorer which will be based at Dunsfold from early this year.

THAMES VALLEY & CHILTERN: The air ambulance charity looks to be on the move again. It could lose its Aylesbury home if alternative accommodation is not found by this month.

Thames Valley and Chiltern has been housed by the Aylesbury-based book producers Market House Books for about four years, but because they are moving to a new location, the charity has been forced to move as well.

Stevie Horton, head of fundraising at the trust, said although they have an office in Bicester they needed free accommodation in Aylesbury because they rely on donations which people bring to their offices.

Launched in 1999, the charity serves the Thames Valley and answers emergency 999 calls from Buckinghamshire and surrounding counties - a third of their rescues come from Buckinghamshire and most are treated at Stoke Mandeville hospital.

WILTSHIRE: According to the local media fears are growing that the Wiltshire Air Ambulance could be downgraded to a daytime operation in around 18 months time.

There is further concern that the ambulance control rooms in Wiltshire, Avon and Gloucestershire could be merged at a Bristol base.

According to the local media campaign the villain of the piece is the Great Western Ambulance Trust that took over from a number of smaller authorities last year. Their official view is that they are reviewing their position – meanwhile the locals are getting into a frenzy claiming all sorts of negative scenarios.

Among these is a suggestion that the board was discussing establishing a new air ambulance based in Bristol in 18 months to add to the existing operations within there are—the Strensham based element of County Air Ambulance is in their area. Meanwhile the board is thought to have agreed to give its support to the continued running of the joint police/air ambulance in Wiltshire.

The Wiltshire Air Ambulance Appeal part-funds the running of the air ambulance with the police and the health service pays the wages of the paramedics. There is understood to be over £1M in the bank. The fears revolve around a suggestion that this fund would end up being moved out of the county to fund other ambulances.

The joint air ambulance service has been saving lives in Wiltshire for 16 years having grown out of a police operation that undertook limited air ambulance work. [Gazette/IPAR]

YORKSHIRE: It has been confirmed that the recent upswing in donations led by the generous TV programme Top Gear fans has helped air ambulance chiefs take on a second life-saving helicopter.

Thousands of pounds flooded into the offices of the Yorkshire Air Ambulance after its only aircraft flew presenter Richard Hammond to hospital following a high speed crash at Elvington, near York, in September.

The new aircraft will be chosen this month and should be operational by spring.



The 1st January 2006 saw the commissioning of the first phase of the Yorkshire Air Ambulance Dedicated Air Desk (DAD). The system has been developed in collaboration with aerotech uk, based on the widely used 'easytask' mission planning & task management system, and utilises the new N3 NHS Broadband link, which enables the monitoring of all emergency 999 calls throughout the Yorkshire region. The second phase of the system development went live during August and now enables ground to air satellite communications and tracking of the aircraft position.

The three screen air desk is manned on a shift system by two staff seconded from the Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS). Both have control room experience operating AMPDS systems and each have completed a full two week HEMS course with further training in helicopter deployment.

Since DAD came into operation, it has reduced the average aircraft activation time from 8 minutes to 3 minutes, this is of particular benefit when the average flight time for Yorkshire Air Ambulance to an incident is around 12 minutes. This reduction in activation time is due to the new 'Mission Management' system, which in conjunction with the ability to monitor emergency calls from three ambulance controls, can search any location via a grid reference, address or post code within a few seconds and plot the direct route giving distance and bearing. The system will also give a list of nearest hospitals to the incident, in distance order, displaying specialities, which is of particular help when operating outside the Yorkshire area. All this allows Yorkshire Air Ambulance to cover a greater area with shorter response times.

The air desk has on several occasions co-ordinated responses from other air support units, by locating the nearest available aircraft to incident. A typical example being an incident on the Yorkshire coast, when air support was requested for two trapped patients. Due to sunset time, the Yorkshire Air Ambulance was not able to complete the incident. Therefore the detail was passed to RAF Kinloss, and a Sea King from RAF Leconfield attended, conveying both patients with head injuries to Hull Royal Infirmary.

With the easytask system already used by the majority of Air Ambulances and Police Air Support Units in the UK it is already possible for a centralised Air Desk to transmit incident data to multiple operators to provide them with the mission data they require prior to arrival on scene. Further development of the system includes two way text messaging with the aircraft (due to be released shortly) and the ability to transmit incident data direct to the aircraft after take off for assessment prior to arrival. Other development under consideration includes the ability to transmit incident data and flight routes to any number of deployed air assets to brief them en route to a scene and for the Air Desk to track their positions and thereby de-conflict air traffic.

Looking to the future therefore, the consideration of a national aero medical co-ordination centre for air ambulances is now a real possibility. Such a centre could enhance not only the effectiveness of air ambulances on a day to day basis, but would have obvious advantages in the event of major incidents/mass casualties enabling the co-ordination and tasking of multiple air ambulance assets.

The table below summarises the activity of the Yorkshire Air Ambulance on the 6 month period from April to September for the last 3 years.

Since the introduction of the Dedicated Air Desk there has been little change in the overall number of missions (despite the aircraft being offline for a higher percentage of time due to maintenance and weather), but significant decreases in "stand down" rates (in which the



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YAA has been tasked to a case where they are not required) and an increase in the numbers of patients carried during a period where there were no alterations to policies and procedures around air transfer of patients.

An audit will be undertaken to include the period of 12 months following full implementation of the dedicated air desk, this will be compared with historical data for YAA and hopefully with comparative data from other air ambulance tasking methods.

YAA Activity 6 month period April to September: -

	2004	2005	2006
Number of Incidents	433	398	396
Availability	81%	86%	79%
Patients Carried	22%	25%	41%
Stood down en route	40%	42%	25%
Scheduled Maintenance	2	50	92
Unscheduled Maintenance	241	23	92
Off Line Weather	29	12	78
Off Line Other	13	91	8
Hours off Line (Total)	281	176	270

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FIRE



FRANCE

Bombardier Aerospace has announced that France's Sécurité Civile has placed a firm order for another Bombardier 415 amphibious aircraft. This order brings the French fleet to twelve Bombardier 415 aircraft.

France received its first CL-215 amphibian aircraft back in 1969 and, in 1994, was the launch customer for the Bombardier 415. Almost forty years later, France continues to rely on the capabilities of the Canadair as the backbone of its firefighting missions.

KOREA

The Korea Forest Service (KFS) will be receiving two more S-64E Airplane Helitankers after a purchase agreement was signed between Erickson Air-Crane Incorporated and the Public Procurement Service at their headquarters in Dae Jeon City, South Korea, on December 15th. With the signing of the contract, valued by Erickson at over \$50M, the two additional purchased Airplanes will bring the Korea Forest Service S-64 Helitanker fleet number to four as the agency continues a highly successful aerial campaign to control wildland and urban interface fire danger within the heavily forested Eastern Region of South Korea, ROK.

UNITED STATES

Erickson Air-Crane has provided strong firefighting support during 2006 as the United States endures its largest wildfire season in over fifty years. Erickson's S-64 Airplane Helitankers have flown significant firefighting hours this past spring, summer and fall, operating on a variety of fires nationally.

In August and September, five of its signature orange Helitankers worked heavy flight hours throughout the Northwest, Rocky Mountain States and California. With the arrival of fall, Erickson aircraft are available to fight extraordinary fire conditions at the height of southern California's fire season. Reinforcing its commitment to the North American firefighting effort, Erickson earlier this year shifted a helitanker back to the states from fire operations in Europe.

SEARCH & RESCUE

AUSTRALIA: The New South Wales Opposition has promised to reverse a State Government decision to hand over the rescue helicopter contract to a foreign company if it wins the next election.

The Government has announced that the Canadian Helicopter Corporation [CHC] has been awarded the tender to provide nine new aircraft.

The decision ends the contracts of the two charity services, NRMA Careflight and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

NORWAY

With the Sikorsky S-92 now entering SAR service across the World it is perhaps worth noting that Norsk Helikopter has become the first offshore oil operator in the North Sea to achieve 10,000 fleet hours with the Sikorsky type – the milestone was reached on November 20

UNITED KINGDOM

Following the successful removal of the pipe bombs from Daedalus airfield, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) have announced that the construction of the new Coastguard Search and Rescue (SAR) helicopter hangar facility has commenced.

This multi-million pound development project will provide modern hangarage for up to three aircraft together with associated accommodation for its 24 hour operational personnel. Raymond Brown Construction Ltd of Ringwood are the appointed Building Contractors who will be undertaking this 50 week build. The project will be managed on the Agency's behalf by the hangar designers, Parson Brinckerhoff Ltd of Godalming, Surrey.

The first aircraft to use the hangar will be the new generation AugustaWestland AW139 which will be replacing the existing Sikorsky S61N helicopters early 2008 when the new Coastguard SAR helicopter contract commences. [MCA]

UNITED STATES



CIVIL AIR PATROL: Last month the CAP celebrated its 65th Anniversary.

Operations started after a handful of aviators banded together because they were concerned about the security of the USA. The start date of December 1 1941 was just six days before the attack on Pearl Harbor that would draw the United States into World War II.

In those days their duties included hunting down German U-boats prowling the Eastern Seaboard of the USA. On spotting a submarine they would go down to as low as 50 feet scaring the submarine into a crash dive.

From those small beginnings the not for profit corporation, an auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force has grown to more than 56,000 members, including 27,000 cadets ages 12- 21 located in eight geographic regions, 52 wings, 1,700 units in all and operates the world's largest fleet (535) of single-engine, piston aircraft and 1,000 emergency services vehicles.

The CAP now performs 95% of inland SAR in the USA saving an average of 100 lives each year. In addition – just as was the case in 1941-45 they operate aerial reconnaissance for homeland security, disaster relief, medical material transport and counter-narcotic missions

COAST GUARD: From January 1, 2007, both 121.5 and 243 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) are prohibited from use in both commercial and recreational watercraft. Boaters wishing to have an emergency rescue beacon aboard their vessel must have a digital 406 MHz model.

The January 1, 2007, date to stop using 121.5 MHz EPIRBs is in preparation for February 1, 2009, when satellite processing of distress signals from all 121.5/243 MHz beacons will terminate. Following this termination date, only the 406 MHz beacons will be detected by

the International Cospas-Sarsat Satellite System which provides distress alert and location data for search and rescue operations around the world.

This change, in large part, was brought about by the unreliability of the 121.5/243 MHz beacons in an emergency situation. Data reveals that with a 121.5 MHz beacon, only one alert out of every 50 is a genuine distress situation. This has a significant effect on expending the limited resources of search and rescue personnel and platforms. With 406 MHz beacons, false alerts have been reduced significantly.

When a 406 MHz beacon signal is received, search and rescue personnel can retrieve information from a registration database. This includes the beacon owner's contact information, emergency contact information, and vessel/aircraft identifying characteristics. Having this information allows the Coast Guard, or other rescue personnel, to respond appropriately.

In the US users are required by law to directly register their beacon in the US 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database at: <http://www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov/> or by calling 1-888-212-SAVE. Other users can register their beacon in their country's national beacon registration database or, if no national database is available, in the International Beacon Registration Database at <https://www.406registration.com/>.

INDUSTRY

AgustaWestland has announced the delivery of three different models of helicopters, an A109 Power, A119 Koala and AW139, to SEACOR Holdings / Era Helicopters during a ceremony held at its Philadelphia facility on December 15.

The AW139 handover marked the first AW139 to be assembled in Philadelphia, PA. AgustaWestland broke ground on a new AW139 production and warehouse facility in Philadelphia during 2006 and plans to begin full-scale production from the new facility in early 2007.

The chief executive of United Technologies Corp. has acknowledged troubles at the company's **Sikorsky Aircraft** subsidiary in Stratford, Connecticut and said production would not be back on schedule there until at least mid-2007.

EADS North America has officially delivered the first UH-72A LUH to the US Army. The US Army had selected the UH-145 (renamed UH-72A) in July 2006 with a requirement for up to 322 helicopters. To date, the Army has ordered a total of 42 UH-72As, along with the associated training services for pilots and maintenance personnel. The

UH-72A is based on the commercially successful Eurocopter EC145 which has become the standard rotary aircraft for emergency medical service and high demanding utility missions.



Pratt & Whitney Canada Corp. (P&WC) announced the opening of a new Parts Distribution Centre (PDC) in Amsterdam in late November. It will provide rapid parts deliveries for its engine customers in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

The Amsterdam PDC carries a large inventory of new parts, accessories and line-replaceable units (LRUs) for all P&WC engine models in support of customers who were previously supplied primarily from P&WC in Canada, ensuring in many cases delivery in 24 hours or less.

AgustaWestland and PZL-Świdnik are partnering to co-operate on the Polish Ministry of Health tender for 23 Emergency Medical Service (EMS) helicopters. PZL-Świdnik already manufactures the complete Grand airframe and if selected PZL-Świdnik will provide product and customer support services after delivery of the aircraft.

PZL-Świdnik and AgustaWestland have already been co-operating successfully for over 10 years with production of the Grand, Koala, Power, LUH and 139 airframes all being carried out in Poland, with over 1,000 skilled jobs at its Świdnik plant being supported by AW programmes.

Researchers at The **University of Alabama** in Huntsville are working on an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) — the Flying Bassett. The UAV had dropped off an unmanned ground vehicle (UGV) nicknamed the Rover, which was slowly trudging toward what could be a hazardous spot.

As Rover approached the suspicious location, a sensor issues an alert. The alert pops up in the corner of the operators display screen — cyclohexane. It is a colorless liquid that is flammable and is deemed harmful for the environment.

As the scientists track the movements of Rover from a safe distance, the path of the UGV changes from white, to yellow and finally to red. The screen is refreshed every two seconds to provide real-time tracking. The ground vehicle has provided valuable information to the researchers by giving them a location, but also what types of danger they may face. The UGV also carries a camera that can provide a close view of the site. Simultaneously, the UAV continues to hover overhead and provide streaming aerial video of the location.

Researchers at the university developed the UAV and UGVs in their laboratories. While the developments in the field of unmanned vehicles are valuable, it is the way in which they work together that is the primary object of the research.

The first element, the Bassett, was initially developed through a grant from the Department of Justice in support of homeland security. In 2003-04 researchers interviewed first responder organisations across North Alabama prior to developing hardware.

This autonomously guided helicopter can operate in flight by either responding to pilot directions or through programmed GPS coordinates. The Bassett can carry up to 20 pounds [8kg] including a Sony digital camera, an infrared camera, and a three-channel video switcher as options. It can hover for 60 minutes and has a range of up to 25 miles.

The lightweight, unmanned ground vehicle – Rover – has four-wheel-drive is a foot long and weighs about three pounds. The light weight of the Rover allows for ease of transport.

The two unmanned vehicles are seen as tools to give vital information to emergency personnel who may be called out for a disaster, whether it is a toxic chemical spill, a nuclear disaster or some other type of emergency. [Newswise]

Switzerland is now an official member of the **European Aviation Safety Agency** [EASA]. It is the fourth non-EU country to adopt European Union aviation safety legislation after Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.



L-3 Communications WESCAM has announced that its flight-proven multi-spectral MX-15i imaging turret is now available with True HD technology and Enhanced Local Area Processing (ELAP). These two state-of-the-art technologies will work together to deliver the industry's finest day and night-time imagery. Setting itself apart from competitive digital HD imaging turrets, which offer only 720p HD, WESCAM's MX-15 True HD System is capable of outputting True HD-1080p, 1080i, 720p and analogue video formats. Utilising a miniature 1080p HD camera (1920 x 1080 pixels) for both EO Zoom and Spotters, WESCAM's HD technology provides higher resolution and better imaging performance over stand-alone 720p HD systems.

In addition to the MX-15's industry-leading HD technology, its IR and EO day and night imagery capability is further enhanced using proprietary real-time ELAP image processing. The system's high-speed on-turret processing and advanced signal processing algorithms provide increased standoff range, improved feature recognition and maximum haze penetration. [L3W]



QinetiQ has secured a five-year Indefinite Duration, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract with the US Military, for the supply of QinetiQ's Vehicle Lightweight Arresting Device (VLAD), the US military designation for the X-Net[®] system.

The base contract has the potential to supply up to 2,000 X-Net[®] units per year, plus training variants. The first firm orders for deployable and training nets, worth in the order of \$9.2M, have already been placed and other X-Net[®] based prototype solutions may transition into the IDIQ in the near future. These new developments should help improve operator safety from the hazards caused by Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs). QinetiQ's X-Net[®] is a man-portable spike and net system that when deployed in a vehicle's path, will bring a range of vehicles to a complete and safe standstill, typically within 75 metres [225 feet], irrespective of whether the vehicle is equipped with either standard or run flat tyres.

Vehicle 'arresting' has become a key operational capability for military peacekeeping operations. With the ever present asymmetric threat, QinetiQ's X-Net[®] system is already being used to establish vehicle checkpoints to protect against suspect vehicles and suicide bombers.

X-Net[®] stops the vehicle without harming its occupants or damaging the vehicle. The driver and passengers remain completely unharmed but any attempts to drive back and forth are thwarted by the net.

X-Net[®] is a British invention that was originally developed for the UK military and is now sold worldwide to police and security forces. Traditional roadside arresting systems typically use hollow spikes, but have limitations in that they only puncture the vehicles tyres and do not rapidly arrest the vehicle

Three helicopters from the **Eurocopter** range the EC120, the AS350B3 and the EC130B4 have been certified by the Russian Authorities. These civil helicopters are now authorised by the Interstate Aviation Committee (MAK) to operate over Russian territory. They are following in the footsteps of the EC145, certified in Russia in late 2005, and the BO105, AS355N and AS350B2, BK117, AS332 L1 and L2 Super Pumas, certified in Russia in the 1990s.

The Republic of **San Marino** – the smallest Republic in the world - has established its own Register of Civilian Aircraft. San Marino is just a bump in the countryside of northern Italy. Potential attractions for registering aircraft there are said to include a low rate of the VAT which promotes a great economic saving not only on the buying, but also on the next spare parts and maintenances and dealing with an efficient administration. The first aircraft on the register was a Cessna 208B Grand Caravan T7-VAL

Dart Helicopter Services has signed an exclusive sole agency agreement with John Cameron Aviation. The agreement grants DHS exclusive world wide (excluding Australia) distributor rights to the JCA Auxiliary Side Locker Fuel Tank for Eurocopter AS 350 and EC 130B4 aircraft.

The Auxiliary Side Locker Fuel Tank provides up to 25% of additional range by allowing operators to install a supplementary tank in the left side locker compartment. The AS350 tank capacity is 34 US gallons (129 litres) and the EC 130 tank is 40 US gallons (152 litres) of usable fuel. The JCA Auxiliary Tank comes complete with its own electrical gauge and pump.

The Auxiliary Side Locker Fuel Tank is currently Australia CASA and Transport Canada approved. John Cameron Aviation expects EASA and FAA certification early in 2007.

The Shephard Press are seeking nominations for the helicopter crew who deserve recognition for a rescue performed since March 2006.

Send an e-mail or letter covering the main details of the rescue, who was involved, where it happened and why it merits special recognition, together with contact numbers for those concerned, and they will do the rest.

The **Defence Helicopter Search and Rescue Award** is presented annually at Shephard's SAR conference and exhibition, this year being staged from 1-3 April 2007, at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, Washington DC, USA. The award is based on the collective decision of the Shephard defence editors and key consultants to the SAR event. It is by no means definitive of all SAR actions and we rely on nominations made by the SAR community.

All nominations must be received by first post/e-mail on February 16, 2007 at Defence Helicopter, 111 High Street, Burnham, BUCKS, HP13 7WY, UK (ad@shephard.co.uk).

French-German group Eurocopter was the only company to launch a bid to purchase 64.89% in aircraft manufacturer [IAR Brasov](#) when the deadline closed last month. Eurocopter is already collaborating with **IAR Brasov**, with which it has set up a joint-venture in which it will hold 51%.

All Metal Maintenance Stands of Las Vegas, Nevada moved from Cameron Street to a larger facility over the Christmas holiday period. Although the website www.maintenancestands.com remained active they were offline from December 21 – 28. The company's new address is 5151 Procyon Unit 115 Las Vegas, NV 89118. The telephone numbers remain unchanged as +1 702-221-9306, fax 222-9301

Runway Technologies new automated technology using optical lasers designed to prevent airport runway incursion and detect debris has received a patent from the United States Patent and Trademark Office. The idea behind this technology is based upon optical lasers installed around the perimeter of the runway constantly monitoring the runway for incursion,

debris, and other potentially hazardous objects.

If detection occurs the information is provided to the aircraft, air traffic controller, and/or ground-based personnel prior to aircraft landing and takeoff, thus providing time for corrective action.

The genesis for this idea came after the Concorde crash tragedy in France in 2000. The Concorde crashed on take-off after a small strip of metal, which came from a tyre ruptured the jetliner's fuel tank.

Runway Technologies was created to further the benefits of this patented technology. Details can be found at www.runwaytechnologies.com

According to the FAA pilots flying over **New York City** are getting sloppier. Incidents of pilots flying into restricted airspace increased 42% over the last year. Violations included flying into temporary restricted areas over Yankee and Shea Stadiums during games. Private pilots weren't the only violators - on September 18 a State Police helicopter violated a presidential TFR and caused fighter jets to be scrambled. Things are not much better in the UK. Flight International recently reported that the CAA reckoned that since they started paying attention to the problem last year infringements of controlled or restricted airspace had risen by 35% in a year. That results in nearly 1.5 infringements a day. [NY Post/AvWeb/CAA]

A recent issue of the *Daily Mail* here in the UK ran a somewhat incomplete story on the Edgely OA7 Optica aircraft. The item continued through to the time that FLS gave up the project a handful of years ago. Regular readers will recall a little has happened since then, leading to a re-launch in the USA at last years Heli-Expo in Dallas Texas as the Optica Lone Star. The type will be built by the Greater Waco Aviation Alliance and the **British Light Aircraft Co** [BLAC].

The team at BLAC includes Chris Burleigh, who was once on the team of the original Optica product, and Andy Richardson formerly with McDonnell Douglas and Boeing

Thus prompted I gained an update on the revised project from Andy Richardson of BLAC. 'The Waco venture is progressing but slower than we (and indeed the US customer base) would wish. The big problem is getting the certification process and design authority transferred from a defunct company to the new one. Best estimate is that this will happen during first half of 2007 which is of course several years quicker than applying for a new certification.'

The **Beriev Design Bureau** and Sukoi have been testing an armed version of the six-seat Be-103 amphibian. Trials have already been held using a Kalashnikov &.62mm machine gun fitted to the starboard side of the fuselage, trialling a larger 12.7mm gun will follow.

The type is on offer to China, Indonesia and Malaysia for border patrol, anti-smuggling and counter-terrorism. [Flight]



ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

21 November 2006 Agusta A109C N53RX. Air ambulance of REACH Air Medical Services, Santa Rosa, California. During a routine pilot training flight near Sonoma County Airport, while climbing out at 2,000 feet, both pilots noticed an instrument panel caution light indicating low oil pressure on the number two engine. The oil pressure gauge showed that oil pressure was below the minimum level for continued operation. Fluctuating torque on the engine was also noted. The engine was shut down and the aircraft flew back to Sonoma and landed uneventfully. Inspection disclosed leaking oil from the number 6 & 7 bearing location. [Concern]

3 December 2006 Eurocopter EC145/BK117C2 N145LF Air ambulance for the University of Massachusetts in Worcester. During recent construction on a new helipad parking area two trenches had been cut to allow the placement of drains to remove collecting rain water. At the end of the day the construction workers placed large pieces of plywood, overlapped and nailed together to cover the trenches and flagged with caution tape. Area was inspected and deemed safe. Shortly after the aircraft departed on a patient mission without incident. On returning to base and on short final the PIC noted that several of the plywood sheets had come loose and were in-flight over the parking spot. The pilot immediately initiated a go-around and landed on an adjacent helipad without further incident. Investigation showed that the plywood flew approx 30yards into an adjacent parking lot. [Concern]

7 December 2006 Eurocopter AS350 N. Los Angeles Police Dept. Los Angeles Police Department helicopter reacting to a warning light made a successful emergency night landing at 46th Street and Alameda Avenue, south Los Angeles. The helicopter landed without incident in a gated-off parking lot on the northwest corner of the intersection, so traffic was not affected. [NBC]

10 December 2006 Bell 412 N410MA. Air ambulance of Mercy Air Service, Inc., a subsidiary of [Air Methods Corp.](#). Crashed near the Cajon Pass, California killing the crew of three - two men and a woman a pilot, a paramedic and a nurse. The accident occurred as the Bell left from [Loma Linda Medical Center](#) to its base in Victorville, California. The helicopter apparently clipped some power lines and crashed and caught fire in conditions that may have included patchy fog. [FAA/Media]

11 December 2006 Bell 407 N302LE. Air ambulance. LifeFlight Eagle of Kansas City, Missouri operated by CJ Systems Aviation Group. While en route to the receiving hospital with a patient the crew heard a loud bang in the engine area followed by an uncommanded yaw and engine chip light. No loss of power was noted but the pilot declared an emergency and performed a run on landing in an unoccupied school parking lot without further incident. The patient was transported by ground to the receiving facility. Initial examination revealed damage to the main and tail rotors as well as the pilot side cowling. The aircraft has been transported by ground to the local maintenance facility for further inspection. [Concern]

14 December 2006 MD500E N92?SD Fresno County Sheriff, California. Whilst patrolling in daylight near the Fresno Fairgrounds the helicopter was struck in the right front windshield by a seagull and suffering loss of Plexiglass glazing panel. When the bird came through the cockpit, it hit a flight instructor causing non-serious injuries.

17 December 2006 Eurocopter EC145/BK117C2 N378TC. Air ambulance of Travis County STAR Flight, Austin, Texas. The helicopter departed to Waco Providence



The International Exhibition for General & Sport Aviation
June 8-10, 2007 - Wycombe Air Park, UK

Hospital with flight paramedic and two members of the Childrens Hospital of Austin paediatric transport specialty team aboard. A few minutes later the crew experienced an audible pop simultaneous with moderate to severe airframe vibration. Five seconds later the tail rotor gearbox chip caution light came on. The flight was aborted and the craft landed at Georgetown Municipal Airport (Texas) to make a uneventful no-hover landing in a grassy area. Post-flight inspection revealed a dynamic weight missing from one of the tail rotor blades. It appeared initially that the mounting spindle for the weight had broken. Additionally, the hinge pin on the intermediate gearbox access hatch was displaced about three inches upward from its normal position. [Concern/Pprune]

Ed: ECD subsequently issued a notice on this incident.

22 December 2006 Eurocopter AS350BA AStar N5793P Air ambulance. Mountain Lifeflight. Near Stead in Nevada the helicopter experienced engine problems and landed in a field 10 miles north-west of Reno. [FAA]

29 December 2006 Helicopter. Air ambulance of Pennstar. Landed safely at Wings Field in Whitpain Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania after smoke began coming from the helicopter. No one was injured. A patient aboard the helicopter was transferred to another helicopter. [Media]

PEOPLE

Simon Foddering a pilot based in Preston, Lancashire died in the crash of a CHC operated AS365N helicopter into Morecambe Bay late last month. The father-of-two was a 33-years old ex-Army flier who had served from the age of 16 in Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Germany and central America. Whilst in Belize he piloted a Lynx helicopter which was used as an air ambulance. In 2003 he left the Army and flew air ambulances in a civilian role. In 2005 he moved to Lancashire from the North Wales Air Ambulance in Caernarvon, working for the North West Air Ambulance until he joined helicopter company CHC Scotia. He had close friends across the helicopter and air ambulance industry.



Image : Lancashire Evening Post

Angela Hughes, Chief Executive, Wales Air Ambulance told *Police Aviation News*: "Simon Foddering was our lead pilot from Bond Air Services, when we launched the new Wales Air Ambulance service from our Caernarfon airbase.

"He was with us for a year before relocating to work for North West Air Ambulance. He was a skilled and able pilot who was a very important member of the team. Simon was a larger than life character who was always coming up with and getting involved in ideas to raise money for the Air Ambulance Charity.

"Our heartfelt condolences are for his loved ones at this terrible time."

North West Air Ambulance issued a similar release expressing their condolences. Killed with Simon was fellow pilot Stephen Potton, who had been with CHC for 20 years, and passengers Robert Warburton, Leslie Ahmed, John Shaw and Alfred Neasham, all four of whom worked for Centrica. A seventh passenger Keith Smith is missing.

The General Manager of Operations for MDHI **David Langenhuizen** left in November month to take advantage of other opportunities. Prior to his departure, MDHI hired Mr. **Ted Gee** as Chief Operating Officer, under which the operations of MDHI, Heritage and MD Monterey was placed. The concept is obviously to provide timely and coordinated progress

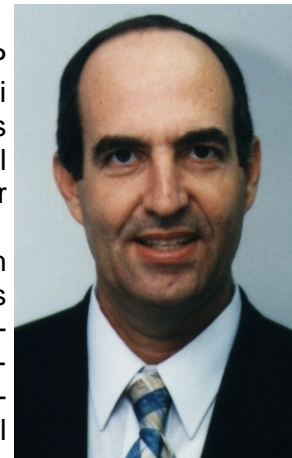
between the three entities in order to better support to customers. Mr. Gee comes to MD from a very strong production background. He was instrumental in the production turn around at Harley-Davidson motorcycles in the 1990s.

With the departure of Mr. Langenhuizen, Todd Lee was brought in as the General Manager of Operations for MDHI.

At Tadiran Communications **Amos Weizman** - currently Senior VP and Deputy CEO of Tadiran Communications - will replace Mr. Hezi Chermoni as President and CEO of the company. After ten years as President and CEO of Tadiran Communications, Mr. Chermoni will retire during the first quarter of 2007, having served the company over a period of 22 years.

Mr. Weizman brings to this position his vast experience and in-depth knowledge of the company's activities, technologies, and products - as well as a broad understanding of the industry and the market environment in which the company operates. He has been with Tadiran Communications for over 28 years, holding a wide range of executive positions, the most recent of which were VP Marketing, VP and General Manager of the Tactical Radio Division.

Upon assuming the position of CEO, Mr. Weizman will also be appointed Chairman of the Board of Tadiran Communications' subsidiaries, Telefunken (Germany) and Talla-Com (U.S.A.).



The Editor was unable to get to the CHAS and PACE conferences due to a clash of dates with the Police Conference.

SHOW NEWS

THE 2006 CHAS CONFERENCE

By Paul Westaway, Training Services Manager, Bond Training Services

The second CHAS Air Ambulance Conference, this year sponsored by Eurocopter McAlpine, has been the only UK event focused specifically on Air Ambulances, and was held on 14th November 2006 at Chateau Impney in Droitwich Spa.



Preceding the exhibition, CHAS held its AGM on 13th November, where members were presented with statistics relating to the past year's activity. It was noted that across the 23 dedicated Air Ambulance operations, some 12,546 HEMS missions and 7,832 Air Ambulance missions were flown. The types of incidents responded to included road traffic collisions, medical emergencies (i.e. chest pain, cardiac arrest), equestrian incidents and falls, these collectively forming circa 85% of the annual workload for all Air Ambulances.

The AGM was followed by the Gala Dinner, sponsored by Ferno Washington, which provided the ideal opportunity for delegates to network with colleagues in what is rapidly becoming an established component of the UK helicopter industry. The Guest Speaker, Jennie Bond, regaled the diners with details of her experiences in the jungle during I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here! and her years as the BBC Royal Correspondent.

The CHAS exhibition the following day boasted an apposite and informative programme, with key speakers from both the medical and operational perspectives addressing specific topics within the industry. Delegates heard lectures on why trauma patients die by Dr Keith Porter; the operations of Swiss Air Ambulance by Heinz Leibundgut of Rega; dealing with the London bombings by Dr Gareth Davies of Virgin HEMS; the CAA's interface with Air Ambulances by Captain David Russell and Mr Tony Eagles; and the future role of Air Ambulances in healthcare by the keynote speaker Professor Sir George Alberti, National Director for Emergency Access.

The Conference organisers had worked with helicopter operators to assemble the three new-technology aircraft currently operating in the Air Ambulance market. These included an AgustaWestland A109P Grand, the MD902 Explorer provided by Yorkshire Air Ambulance, and the Eurocopter EC135T2 provided by West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Additionally, medical equipment suppliers exhibited alongside charities, forming a busy showcase arena whereby delegates reviewed latest developments in both equipment and Air Ambulance fundraising worlds respectively.

In the meantime a German web site has published an outline of the PACE event in Dublin. A rough translation gives these details: -

PACE / AGIS conference in Dublin took place on that 15-16 November in Dublin. The conference was promoted via European Union AGIS funding.

The conference worked under the title 'Best practices in the USA of air support units in joint investigations and hot pursuits in member states' with a goal of facilitating cooperation between European police squadrons particularly in the areas of technology, training, equipment, cross-border pursuit and terrorism.

There were 80 participants drawn from 26 countries; Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, north Ireland, Norway, Austria, Poland, Eire, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and England as well as two participants from the US based ALEA (Airborne Law Enforcement Association). Representatives of German police helicopter squadrons did not take part at the conference although as members they were invited. [Ed: The date was a particularly busy one in Germany at the time, something to do with escorting nuclear waste].

After the official greeting to the delegates from the Garda Siochana Commissioner Mr. Noel Conroy, Garda Superintendent Patrick Leahy and the PACE President Edo van den Brink [KLPD Netherlands] there were presentations on Cross Border operations, the latest in video technology, image technology and crewing police helicopters.

It was primarily about increasing collaboration between each of the police helicopter squadrons of Europe. One of the goals is to operate under a uniform set of regulations for police flying in Europe. Currently the various national police forces operate under a set of very different regulations created by each nation pretty much in isolation. The result is that there are large differences in regulation and licensing.

At the AGM of PACE there were some changes in the regulations governing the group and changes in the Board of Directors. A new vice-president, Police Sergeant Donal Doyle Garda Air Support was selected. Constable Pete Norton of the South Yorkshire Police remains the Treasurer [and the PACE webmaster]. www.pacenet.info

FUTURE EVENTS – *dates for your diary*

3-8 June 2007 International Maritime Rescue Federation, World Maritime Rescue Congress, Conference & Exhibition and the 20th International Lifeboat Conference. Quality Hotel 11, Gothenburg, Sweden. Arranged and marketed in association with Shephard Conferences +44 1628 606980 hb@shephard.co.uk www.shephard.co.uk/events

6-8 June 2007 Irish Heli-Expo, PuncHESTOWN. Eire. This will be Irelands 1st Helicopter Exhibition The organisation for it is being led by Dave Scully call +353 4587 7790, Fax: 7786 Cell: +353 86273 0949 Email: dave@irishheliexpo.com Web: www.irishheliexpo.com Skype:davescully1 23 miles from Dublin on the PuncHESTOWN Racecourse, Kildare

8-10 June 2007 Aeroexpo 2007. Wycombe Air Park. The venue offers easy access for International Exhibitors and Visitors to sample this exciting International Event for all involved in General Aviation, at the airfield near High Wycombe, Bucks (EGTB). Now an annual GA event.

4-5 December 2007 ISNR London, Olympia. A new series of international events addressing the terrorist threats and homeland security challenges facing governments, police forces and businesses around the world has been launched by Reed Exhibitions Aerospace & Defence Group. ISNR (International Security National Resilience) has been created to promote a climate of understanding, knowledge-sharing and co-operation to help combat these situations.

The first event in the series will be ISNR London this December, this will be followed by ISNR Abu

Dhabi, which will be held in the city's International Exhibition Centre from 2-5 March 2008. More events are anticipated as the ISNR portfolio grows.

ISNR London is founded on the rationale that there's a paramount need for an integrated approach to security issues. The concept has emerged out of Reed Exhibitions' recent acquisition of the Air, Port and Terminal Security (APTS) exhibition and its co-located events, which include the recently held Counter Terror World.

Reed is broadening the scope of these existing events into a single platform that will cover the entire spectrum of the homeland security arena. This includes: intelligence and threat assessment, border & transport security, counter terrorism, critical infrastructure protection, crisis management and resilience, plus emergency preparedness and response.

Each ISNR event will consist of a high-level conference, practical workshops and an exhibition area supported by companies that specialise in high-end security technology, systems and services.

9-12 October 2007 MILIPOL PARIS, Paris Expo Porte de Versailles. The 15th worldwide exhibition of internal State security. The whole of the security field (international and small manufacturers) will be represented at this unique meeting place. They will show their latest products and innovations, services and technologies to decision-makers for public and industrial security, from French and international government and authorities to representatives from sensitive and industrial sites. MILIPOL is organised under the aegis of the French Ministry of Interior by GIE MILIPOL.

Last time this event was held at Le Bourget airport, in the NE of Paris - easy to get to but blighted by rail strikes and some difficulty with the bus shuttles to the venue. In order to continually improve the exhibition the organizers have announced that this year the event is changing venue and will now be held in the SW of the City close to the [dreaded] Perifrique roadway at: Paris Expo Porte de Versailles.

The PAN Report on the 2005 Milipol is still archived at www.policeaviationnews.com



3-5 June 2008 GPEC 2008 Munich Trade Fair Centre, Munich, Germany. [General Police Equipment Exhibition & Conference]. Launched in late November by the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior, Munich International Trade Fairs and the organiser of GPEC, Exhibition & Marketing Wehrstedt GmbH.

In 2006 6,093 security experts from 48 countries met with 471 exhibitors from 26 countries at the 4th GPEC®. The programme includes a range of fringe events with specific special events underlining the character of GPEC® as interdepartmental platform for internal and external security.

GPEC® is a closed specialised trade fair exclusively for members of authorities with accompanying congress and lecture programme for business with police equipment, security technology and services. Target groups are police, border guard, customs, the prison service, and government services for internal and external security as well as special task force and infantry units. EMW Exhibition & Marketing Wehrstedt GmbH, Phone: +49 34743 62 092 E-Mail: info@GPEC.de Internet: www.POLICESHOW.com

DIARY

- 15-19 January 2007 LETA Training Event. LETA Basic and Advanced re-certification seminar at Chilliwach, British Columbia, Canada. Hosted by: RCMP Pacific Regional Training Centre Contact Person: Sgt. Bryon Massie Phone: +1 (604) 707-4235 or (604) 991-0543. Alternate Contact Person: Cpl. Jon Heron Phone: (604) 507-5974. <http://leta.org/board.htm>
- 24-25 January 2007 3rd International Sports Security Summit, QE2 Conference Centre, London www.sportssecuritysummit.com
- 6-8 February 2007 VideoForum 2007. Earls Court 2, London 10.00 - 17.00 (Closes 16.00 Thursday) Details at www.videoforum.co.uk
- 1-3 March 2007 Heli-Expo 2007. Orange County Convention Center, International Drive, Orlando, Connections Housing will be coordinating the housing for HELI-EXPO 2007. The Rosen Centre is the headquarters hotel. Reservations should be made quickly as their rooms will sell out very quickly! Go to www.heliexpo.com and click on Housing.
- 7-8 March 2007 5th Avionics Exhibition & Conferences in Amsterdam – This is the only event in Europe to focus purely on core electronic technologies, essentially based within the cockpit. As well as an established exhibition the 5th show, sponsored by Airbus, now features; 1. Civil Avionics Conference, 2. Military Avionics Conference, 3. New COTS/Embedded feature. Organised by The Simply Group Ltd abroadbent@simplygrouppltd.com www.avionics-event.com
- 7-8 March 2007 5th Annual Aero Engine Parts: Repair or Replace? Conference. Crowne Plaza Dublin Airport Hotel, Dublin, Ireland. Online booking is now available for this Conference. For more information, to register your place and book on-line, visit <http://www.aviationindustrygroup.com/index.cfm?pg=228&archive=false&offset=1> There are free places available at this conference for representatives of non-service provider airlines' engineering and maintenance / powerplant departments (those airlines not offering third party maintenance or aircraft / engine leasing services). If you think you are eligible for a free place, please contact the organisers directly for a promotional on-line booking