

Police Aviation News

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Number 159 July 2009

40 years on

Sloane Helicopters celebrate

POLICE HELICOPTER DESTROYED

Night attack on Birmingham International wrecks EC135

CALIFORNIA BUDGETS CUT BACK POLICE HELICOPTERS

Sloane

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LAW ENFORCEMENT

AUSTRIA

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR: The final four EC135P2i helicopters have been delivered to the BMI air fleet. As predicted these last four are fully role-equipped with FLIR, the initial 2008 deliveries were less well equipped.

In September 2007: Austrian Ministry of Interior signed a contract for the eight EC135s IFR-equipped and NVG compatible, all have rappelling (roping) devices and double cargo hooks.

The contract also includes Power by the Hour service over a period of 10 years, and technical support for the police during the introduction phase.



Hossi

GERMANY

BUNDESPOLIZEI: The German Bundespolizei has received dual certification for their Frasca built EC1354 helicopter training device as a JAR-FTD H FTD 2 and FNPT III MCC. The device was modelled on an EC135T2+ helicopter and features a 200° x 70° TruVision visual display system with a large real world database including the Bonn and Cologne area. Other features include a high fidelity EC135T2 cockpit equipped with EFIS, moving map display, GPS and realistic vibration cues. The device was installed at the main Sankt Augustin base of the Federal Police and was featured in PAN over 18 months ago. www.frasca.com

INDIA

COAST GUARD: In a predictable upgrade to its capabilities the Coast Guard has given the go-ahead to buy twelve additional Dornier Do228 aircraft. They are locally built and might be expected to deliver five airframes this year.

After the November 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, the government decided to put some requirements on fast track and these include buying fast patrol vessels and looking towards short-term increases in air capabilities by leasing.

The Coast Guard, which now has the responsibility of surveillance from the shoreline to 200 nautical miles, has been given the go-ahead to acquire the twelve Dornier aircraft. The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, which is making this German aircraft under licence, has been asked to hand over at least five of them by the year-end. RUAG, who are completing Do228 airframes for the World market based upon imported Indian airframes say that the stepping up of Indian build programme will not affect deliveries of green airframes to their German factory.

The Government of India is considering an offer from the US Coast Guard to lease twelve of its twin-engine helicopters. Sources suggest these may be Sikorsky or Agusta helicopters. A decision will also have to be made whether these should be taken on wet or dry lease.

At present, the Coast Guard has 24 Do228, 17 Chetak [Alouette] and 3 Dhruv AL helicopters available for service.

Sources claim that another area of improvement to Coast Guard resources in the wake of the Mumbai attacks is to improve coastal radar. The Director-General of the Coast Guard has visited France to study the available equipment. A top-ranking Naval Commander is also expected to travel to France between June 30 and July 4 — when both navies hold bilateral exercises.

The advertisement features a central image of a cockpit with multiple monitors displaying various tracking and search capabilities. Five circular callouts highlight specific features: 'SEARCH & RESCUE' showing a helicopter and a boat; 'SHIP TRACKING' showing a large cargo ship; 'TRAFFIC PROXIMITY' showing a yellow helicopter; 'VEHICLE TRACKING' showing a yellow sports car; and 'CAMERA LOCATION' showing a landscape view. The Honeywell logo is prominently displayed in red at the bottom right. Below the logo, contact information for Honeywell Aerospace is provided: Tel: USA: +1 800 601 3099 International +44 1243 783763, Enquires: mission.systems@Honeywell.com, and Website: www.skyforce.co.uk. At the bottom left, the text reads 'OBSERVER (MKIII Mission System) ON TRACK ON TARGET ON TIME'.

RUSSIA

BORDER GUARD: FSBs Border Guard Service has started tests of a new system for automatic border control incorporating unmanned aircraft.

The new system 'Polosa-71' includes signal devices, equipment for video and radar surveillance, infrared, heat and seismic sensors. In course of the last five years 14 new vessels and 47 motor boats have been taken into service.

SPAIN

Spanish authorities have foiled a plot by ETA members to help two prisoners escape from a jail in southern Spain.

ETA was planning to help the prisoners break out of a jail in Huelva and cross into Portugal by helicopter as part of a plot dating back to 2007.

Since 1968, ETA has killed more than 800 people in bombings and shootings as part of its four-decade campaign for an independent Basque homeland.

UNITED KINGDOM

EAST MIDLANDS: The EMAS unit has extended an existing Northamptonshire 'What the police helicopter is doing over your house' website page to cover Leicestershire.

The operation provides air support cover to Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire and for some time the press office in Northamptonshire has provided a listing of flight operations over the county for its local residents. The new scheme launched last month provides map based information to Leicestershire ratepayers of local response activity that is uploaded by the unit and is therefore more up to date. Both sources are accessible via links from the unit website at www.emasu.co.uk The information currently uploaded to the two sites does not provide a complete picture however as no similar system exists for Warwickshire .

METROPOLITAN: London's Metropolitan Police Air Support Unit is celebrating the landmark of 5,000 hours flown on its fleet of three EC145 helicopters, with a ringing endorsement of the contribution made by Skyquest Aviation's video management system. Sergeant Richard Brandon says that the five mission management screens, multiple recording devices and the ability to view multiple sensors at once, continue to represent a revolution in law-enforcement imagery.

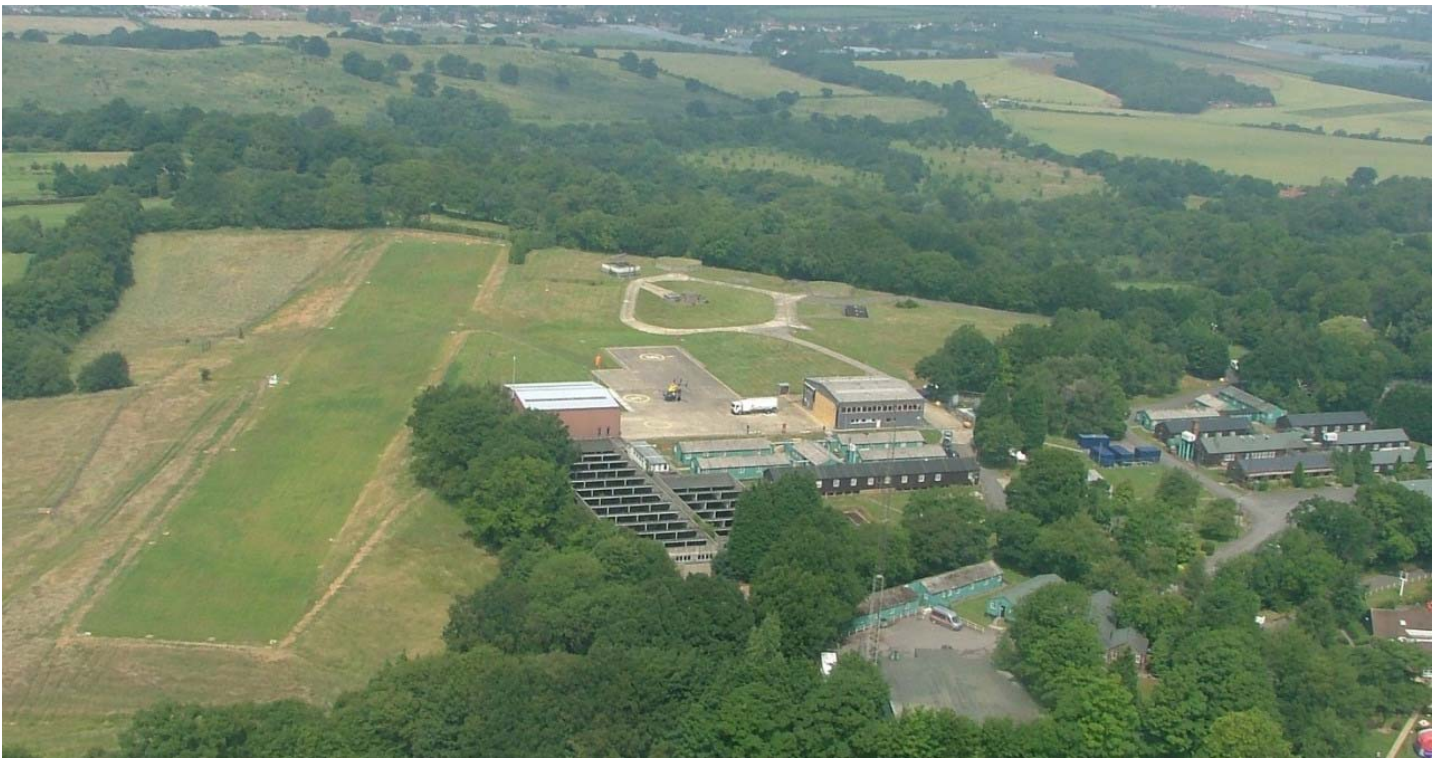
'Scarcely a day goes by when we don't look at our system – now approaching two years old – and remark that this remains absolutely cutting-edge technology. There's simply nothing better out there.'

Skyquest's VMS is currently fitted to over half the police helicopters flying over the UK. Using touch-screen technology, it enables observers and pilots to independently select, view and record the images they need with no signal loss.

Geoff Turner of Skyquest says that their VMS, uniquely, enables each crewmember to select and view the most appropriate sensor for the task in hand. 'The pilot may select the moving-map on his flip-up screen, while one observer can view approaches to a crime-scene and the other check a road for infra-red traces. It offers each of them complete flexibility.'

Skyquest Aviation supplies industry leading video display, video distribution, video recording and video transmitting technology for airborne surveillance aircraft. Worldwide customers typically include police, customs, coastguard, border patrol, military, search & rescue, air ambulance and government agencies. It also supplies directly to OEMs and prime contractors worldwide, as well as most of the world's leading aircraft manufacturers.





Previous page caption: The Skyquest VMS integrated with the Met Police EC145s [Skyquest]. This page above: Completed late in 2008 the new clear area strip is now a lush feature of Lippitts Hill. [WAFW 28/6]

London's ASU is hoping to begin fast roping and winching towards the end of this year. The unit, which operates three Eurocopter EC145s from Lippitts Hill in Essex, is waiting on changes in legislation which will eventually allow the unit to make use of the equipment which has been fitted to the aircraft since their delivery in 2007.

Speaking at the Royal Aeronautical Society's Helicopter Support and Capability Sustainment event in London, Sgt Richard Brandon, Technology and Training Manager at the unit said current rules mean they cannot carry out fast roping or winching, but work with the Department for Transport should result in a change by year end.

The Met Police's EC145s now have the highest number of flying hours of any 145 in the world, each flying around 1,100 hours a year. A fleet of three allows one aircraft to be in constant deep maintenance, although occasionally operational demands require that all three aircraft need to be available. Some events are predictable but the unit only had five weeks notice of the G20 conference.

Despite the far greater workload it represents the upcoming 2012 Olympics is currently being treated as business as usual but there are thoughts of a fourth aircraft, and that would need to be ordered soon if that was the requirement.

One of the biggest challenges the unit faces is rapid alterations to the aircraft role. Removing the equipment takes time and the number of engineers available to help the flight crews is limited. The unit is currently advertising for another engineer. One primary interest is finding means to make the physical aspects of role change easier and hopefully not involving the use of specialist tools.

Sergeant Brandon is to give a presentation on the operational aspects and planning pressures of major event operations at the 2009 PAvCon Police Aviation Conference at Woodford, Essex in September. In an increasingly crowded programme the conference will also include input from the French Gendarmerie giving their slant on aspects of air policing of major events.



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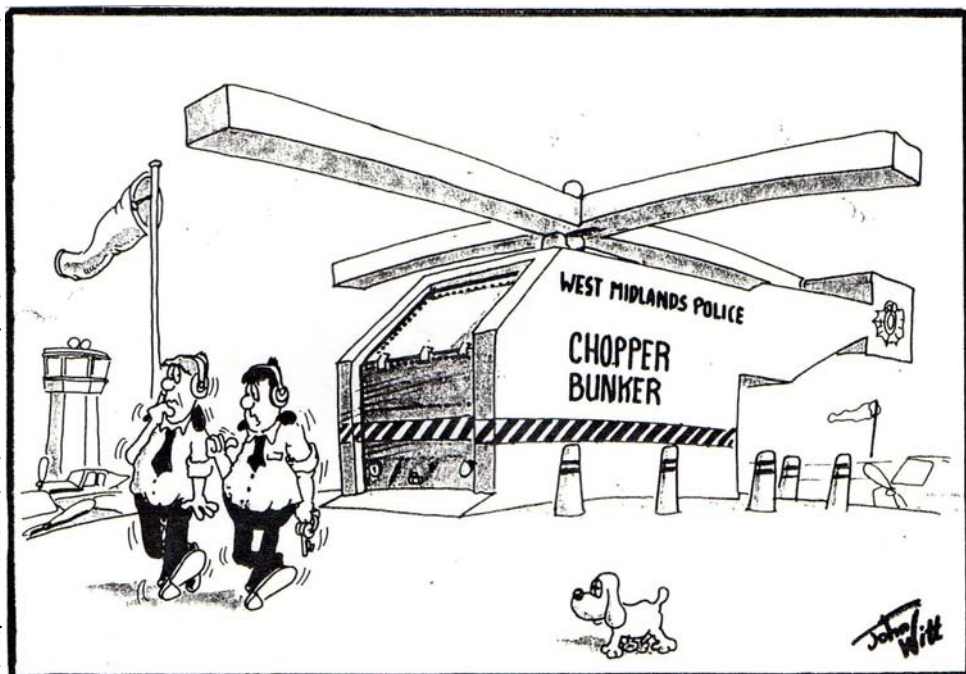
WEST MIDLANDS: In the early hours of June 8 the West Midlands Police Eurocopter EC135T2 helicopter suffered extensive damage in a suspected arson attack. Air traffic controllers raised the alarm when they spotted flames on the front of the helicopter at its landing site at Elmdon Airport about 0200 BST. The airfield, better known as Birmingham International, was temporarily closed for about 30 minutes after the incident. No scheduled passenger jets operate from the immediate area of the attack and no flights were affected, the airport is fully operational. The helicopter, launched in September 2007, was destroyed in the attack. No details of the damage have been released but available images show that the forward cabin and rotors were destroyed leaving just the rear fuselage, tail boom and Fenestron undamaged. Even the engines were directly above the fire and are unlikely to have survived. The high-definition video and FLIR camera system and searchlight are unlikely to be recoverable.



The story that developed is that a pair of unknown attackers cut through the chain link fence surrounding the secure airport perimeter and rode through on a Suzuki DZR 400cc motor cycle to the police operations pad. Having fire bombed the empty airframe they returned to the same gap in the fence and set fire to the bike in an attempt to destroy forensic evidence. It will have taken a matter of minutes. Police restored air cover above the West Midlands within two hours of the incident and moves are already underway to bring in a permanent replacement. An enhanced variation on mutual aid is in place as other options are explored.

Ed: Like the Surrey helicopter reported damaged in May the West Midlands machine spent its readiness hours in the open. Unlike Surrey they did not even have a hangar – and never have had – so the aircraft has always been out in all weathers and usually behind a protective circle of concrete blocks. A decade ago the unit was famous for its anti-ram-attack measures and it bred a classic cartoon by the late Cheshire Constabulary cartoonist John Whitaker [signed as John Witt].

Even if the airport was alerted earlier there was no real prospect of heading off a motorcycle travelling at speed. It seems quite likely that the culprit here was Google Earth and it would have eased the attackers' task in planning the attack route. The image still at Google shows the helicopter on its pad, the defensive wall and the way in. More concerning in the wider sense was that the attack route involved the bombers passing parked commercial airliners. A root and branch security overhaul is therefore underway at the airport let alone a great deal of thought going into the security of police aviation assets wherever they are located.



“We should have known that they would Superglue the locks”

On one hand it is good to know that the criminal attacks are seen as worthwhile – they boost the worth of air support – but the overall lack of viable reserve aircraft continues to be an unresolved problem.



Launch Day
in 2007

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A police officer is shown from the side, wearing sunglasses and a dark uniform. He is holding a handheld device labeled "BMS CVIII". The device's screen displays a blue car in a parking lot, with a white callout bubble pointing to it that says "Suspect". Another callout bubble points to the screen with the text "GeoPoint shows direction and distance to target". The screen also shows a yellow arrow and the text "60 FT".

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direction and
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Suspect

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WEST YORKSHIRE: This month sees the commencement of a new group aircraft acquisition process for the UK police. The lead operator for this process is West Yorkshire based in Wakefield. The process will be run in a similar manner to the first of these group acquisitions, it is likely to be long winded but eventually lead to a pretty earth shattering conclusion.

Earth shattering? Well pretty much so. The [current] forces in this process are West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Lancashire, Merseyside and Western Counties. The first two operate the MD902 Explorer and the latter three the EC135T2. All are said to be convinced about the efficiency of their current mounts and it is to be winner takes all. There will be tears somewhere in industry as the winner is declared.

The earlier process upon which this was modelled was undertaken by Thames Valley Police [Chiltern Consortium] and led to the selection of six identically equipped Eurocopter EC135P2 helicopters for a number of police forces with deliveries due to commence shortly. In that case it was pretty much like for like they will replace EC135T1 helicopters and an Islander fixed wing.

With input from each of the other police forces involved the West Yorkshire effort will lead to the selection of an airframe and the equipment fitted to it. The current selection relates to FLIR and camera equipment and will be presented at Wakefield on the 22nd of this month.

The contenders will follow a similar process to that undertaken by the Belgian Police earlier this year. In that case Axsys, FLIR, Wescam and Zeiss were trialed alongside each other on the ground and in the air to select the winner.

Further down the road the major difference with this UK process is that the Bell 429 is just about available in time for airframe selection – and as before this is a winner takes all contract. MD900 Explorer operator West Yorkshire will have to weave its way through the airframe selection from the Explorer, EC135, Agusta 109, each with a known pedigree, and the as yet untried 429 from a respected manufacturer.

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UNITED STATES

FEDERAL: EADS North America and its subsidiary, American Eurocopter, have selected the industry team that will provide components and sub-systems for putting forward the UH-72A Lakota Light Utility Helicopter Security and Support (S&S) mission equipment package (MEP).

The UH-72A in the S&S configuration will provide Army National Guard units the flexibility to respond to a wide variety of Homeland Security, Homeland Defense and civil law enforcement support missions. The mission equipment package consists of an electro-optical infra-red sensor, data communications suite, moving map display, cabin and cockpit screens, a digital video recorder and a searchlight.

Companies selected to provide key components and sub-systems for the S&S mission equipment package are:

LCX Systems;

Sierra Nevada Corporation

Ranger Rotorcraft Group

MARK IV Luminator

L-3 Communications.

The Army plans to equip 200 National Guard Lakota's with the S&S mission equipment package to continue to meet the evolving operational requirements of the helicopter type within the US Army.

UH-72As are used in operations including Medevac and evacuation missions, general and multi-role support missions, VIP transport and paratroop operations. The existing Lakota fleet has shown an operational availability rate higher than 90%.

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TRACKING SUSPECT

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Precision from Above

FEDERAL: The FBI has received delivery of a Sikorsky-built UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter as part of an initiative to modernize the agency's rotary wing fleet. This is the first UH-60M aircraft to enter service outside of the US Army.

The FBI has ordered three of Sikorsky's UH-60M variant of the widely deployed Black Hawk aircraft in a move to modernize the agency's helicopter fleet.

FEDERAL: US Customs and Border Protection has deployed one of its unmanned aircraft to Fort Drum, New York State, to perform surveillance operations along the maritime border of Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence Seaway, and land border of New York and Ontario.

CBP currently has five Predator B unmanned aircraft that provide unique border security surveillance capacity using high specification optical equipment coupled with extended flight duration. A CBP fixed wing advanced surveillance aircraft, the P-3, also has been assigned to the task.

The New York deployment is part of a multi-agency effort called Operation Empire Shield. The operation is designed to demonstrate unmanned aircraft operations and evaluate law enforcement coordination concepts over both land and maritime environments at the Northern Border.

CALIFORNIA: The Oakland PD faces one of the highest crime rates in the USA, and a deficit of more than \$80M. That budget gap has virtually grounded the air support operation. The helicopter is now being operated for emergencies only and three officers and the sergeant are being reassigned to patrol.

Last year the helicopter unit helped in almost 650 arrests. The officers in the sky responded to almost 6,000 calls.

The credit crunch also halted the Robinson R44 based police aviation operation in the City of San Bernardino.. Although it was only a five days a week operation the police on the ground had grown to rely upon the reassuring presence of the helicopter in providing officer safety.

In the end the leased helicopter was extracting \$500,000 from a public purse facing a \$4.7M shortfall and was seen as a luxury by the bean counters. Earlier in the year the 50 officers were threatened with layoffs.

Corona police recently grounded their \$950,000 helicopter after seven years of use, citing the need to bridge a \$10.5M gap in the city's budget.

Other Inland agencies, including Riverside police and the San Bernardino County sheriff, have cut general helicopter patrols, saving fuel and maintenance costs by focusing on emergency calls.

GEORGIA: The City of Atlanta Police Department has awarded a comprehensive night vision solution contract to Night Flight Concepts, Inc. of Port St. Lucie, Florida. NFC will provide all of the necessary night vision equipment, pilot and crewmember training, NVG maintenance services and install night vision lighting for the MD500 helicopter operated.

TEXAS: Dallas City Council members approved spending up to \$106,261 on Wednesday to repair one of the Helicopter Unit's helicopters.

The sum has been approved to meet costs associated with a heavy maintenance inspection due at 1,750 flight hours. Typically, such inspections cost between \$60,000 and \$70,000 for a helicopter. But in this case, mechanics discovered additional damage to the helicopter once they began inspecting it, pushing up the cost of repairs.

Currently, the unit has three newer helicopters and one older helicopter destined for a long-planned police museum.



AIR AMBULANCE

EGYPT

AgustaWestland has announced that the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt has signed a contract for three AW109 Power helicopters to serve in an air ambulance role. The helicopters will be operated by the Egyptian Air Force and used to perform emergency medical service (EMS) duties on behalf of the Ministry of Health. This is the first customer for the AW109 Power in Egypt.

Cessna Aircraft Company has announced that Egypt's Smart Aviation will take delivery this year of the first two Citation Sovereigns certified for medical evacuation (medevac) with a dual-patient system from LifePort. The two medevac Sovereigns are part of a six-aircraft order from Cairo based Smart.

Smart Aviation is one of Egypt's leading charter companies with operations throughout the Middle East, Africa and Europe. The medevac mission will be in addition to Smart's regular VIP charter service.

LifePort, a leading supplier of medical interiors for aircraft, was scheduled to certify a Patient Loading Utility System (PLUS) in a single configuration for the Sovereign last month and will complete the requirements for the supplemental type certificate for the dual patient interior in the third quarter. Smart's Sovereigns will go into service soon after.

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ESSEX & HERTS: The 10th annual Essex Air Ambulance Motorcycle Run takes place on Sunday 13th September 2009. This year is set to be even more exciting than ever as the Charity gears up for the 10th anniversary celebrations of its biggest and longest running event.

The preparations for this landmark event are now in full swing; which over the last ten years has grown into the biggest motorcycle run within the County. It all started from humble beginnings with a mere 500 bikers taking part in the very first Essex Air Ambulance Motorcycle Run back in 2000. Now the Run attracts in excess of 4,500 bikers every year!

THAMES VALLEY & CHILTERN: The Thames Valley & Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust (TVACAA) celebrated 10 years of operation with a cream tea birthday party held at the Odney Club in Cookham, Berkshire on June 14.

The Odney Club was selected as the most suitable venue closest to the borders of the three counties. Pride of place at the celebration went to the Eurocopter EC135T2 itself and a stand-in machine covered operations meanwhile.

The Thames Valley & Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust, launched in June 1999 using an Agusta A109 Power, it provides a life saving service for the Thames Valley area covering Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire



FIRE



UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: The California Department of Fire and Forestry Protection are equipping its entire fleet of UH-1H Super Huey helicopters with AKV engine cycle counters from DART Helicopter Services (DHS).

CAL FIRE has flown eight helicopters with cycle counters since 2008, and now plans to equip three remaining Hueys in its fleet, according to Bob Fisher, Helicopter Maintenance Officer. Using the manufacturer's cycle counting algorithms, the AKV equipment precisely and accurately tracks operations and usage of the helicopters' turbine T-53-703 engines.

"The cycle counters help us appropriately extend the life cycles of our engines and reduce operating costs," said Fisher. "Flying in high, hot environments, we place high demands on our engines. The cycle counters are tools we use to maintain our engines and better battle California's frequent wildfires." CAL FIRE is responsible for protecting 31 million acres of state wildland.

"Using the cycle counter will immediately improve the bottom line for any operator," said Jonathan Gunn, president of AKV, Inc., "The low acquisition price enables an immediate return on the investment."

In addition to the cycle counters, CAL FIRE has equipped its fleet with DART skid tubes, cross tubes, wear plates and wear pads, door handle kits and fuel purge canister.



HAWAII: Hawaii County is planning to spend some \$2M in replacing its existing 27-years old SAR helicopter. Refurbishing the current Chopper 1 would cost \$800,000, and the aircraft would continue costing more in routine maintenance as it ages.

Only one company submitted a bid to the county to provide the new helicopter. MD Helicopters of Arizona offered a 2010 MD 500E for \$1,992,525. The company would also take the old MD as a trade-in for \$238,000.

UNITED KINGDOM

A Search and Rescue (SAR) Sikorsky S-92® helicopter operating in the United Kingdom has reached the operational milestone of 1,000 flight hours as the SAR services provided by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and under the operation of CHC Helicopter Corp. continue to operate at availability levels of 98%.

CHC Search and Rescue operates four SAR S-92 helicopters from two bases covering territory in the North Atlantic and the North Sea. In Stornoway, Western Isles, Scotland, the fleet has conducted 244 rescue missions, while missions flown out of Sumburgh, Shetland Isles, Scotland, have totalled 150 to date.

The S-92 helicopter, G-SARB, reached and surpassed the 1,000-hour milestone in May 2009. The aircraft is one of two deployed at the Stornoway base for the MCA. This helicopter and the second Stornoway S-92 G-CGMU, completed 172 SAR missions in 2008 - the base's busiest year since operations began there in 1987.

Personal locator beacons are set to be reintroduced for workers on helicopters flying offshore.

The devices were withdrawn after they were found to have interfered with rescue equipment after a Super Puma ditched into the North Sea in February.

The UK offshore oil and gas industry is planning to bring PLBs back into use from July.

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The UK CAA hosted a successful meeting on SAR equipment needs for offshore helicopters late last month.

Key organisations involved in the operation and regulation of offshore helicopter operations met with representatives from the UK's search and rescue services at a meeting initiated by the UK CAA. Central was the outstanding matter of the role of Personal Locator Beacons (PLB) and Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELT).

In a search and rescue situation it is important that all emergency locator transmitting devices work successfully without compromising the safe operation of the helicopter in which they are carried.

Following the Super Puma accident in February of this year, it was suspected that PLBs issued to passengers interfered with the primary Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) fitted to the helicopter and life rafts. As a result, the carriage of PLBs was restricted.

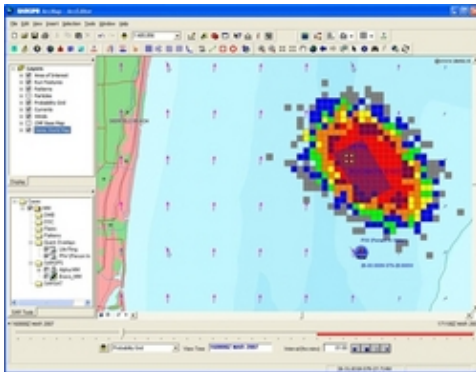
At the late June meeting with representatives of Offshore helicopter operators: Bond, Bristow, CHC Scotia and BIH, the SAR operators: RAF, the Marine and Coastguard Agency and the Emergency Response and Rescue Vessel Association, the Offshore industry: Oil and Gas UK and BP, manufacturers: SML Technologies and HR Smith and the regulatory bodies: CAA and HSE a way to progress the re-instatement of PLBs in offshore helicopters was agreed.

UNITED STATES

FEDERAL: On Scene Magazine the official journal of the SAR industry since 1960 is to halt publication in paper print format.

Future editions will appear at www.uscg.mil/hq/CG5/CG53

US Coast Guard SAR experts based in the Portsmouth Virginia Rescue Coordination Center assisted officials at the Rescue Coordination Center in Gris Nez, France, with the search for Air France Flight 447 by providing information and advanced technology to help locate the plane's fuselage as well as recover passengers and crew who were lost in the crash.



SAROPS search and rescue technology used to locate Air France Flight 447 generates a search area probability grid based on real-time and forecast winds and currents to help the recovery effort.

The Coast Guard assisted the French authorities by applying their new, advanced Optimal Planning System (SAROPS) that generates optimized search area predictions for objects missing at sea. Recovery of bodies and debris is significant not only for families, but for crash investigators, said Mary Schiavo, a former inspector general for the US Department of Transportation.

SAROPS includes a reverse drift capability, which predicts a search area based on the location where floating wreckage is found. This enables search planners to develop optimal search patterns, maximizing the probability of successfully locating search objects. By tracking information on when and where debris is found, the SAROPS system works backward using the weather, wind and sea conditions over a specified period of time to estimate a probable location of the plane. Based on this position, search efforts can be focused to find the plane's flight data recorders.



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INDUSTRY

DART Helicopter Services (DHS) has acquired a division of Heliproducts Industries Ltd. The acquisition further expands DHS's extensive portfolio of helicopter tooling and introduces a new line of tools for Eurocopter AS350s. A key new offering is a convenient, portable tool kit for AS350 field maintenance that is especially popular with AS350/355 operators and will be featured in the DART exhibit (627) at the upcoming Airborne Law Enforcement Association conference in late July.

The expanded product line also includes tools for Bell Helicopter, MD Helicopter, Honeywell, Rolls Royce, and Turbomeca products. DHS is already the exclusive distributor for 900 standard and custom tools produced by DHS partner Red Barn Machine. Red Barn will also manufacture and distribute the new line of Heliproducts tools.

Simplex Manufacturing has acquired Helipod International, a leading developer and manufacturer of certified accessory products for Robinson helicopters, including a variety of cargo pods, spray systems and other specialty items.

With its headquarters located near Auckland, New Zealand, Helipod has become well known for its high quality products and has developed strong brand name recognition worldwide.

Manufacturing will be shared between New Zealand and Portland, while all sales activities will be based from the Simplex office in Portland.

General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire **Axsys Technologies**, Inc. The cost of the transaction should be in the region of \$643M.

Connecticut-based Axsys employs approximately 1,000 workers in five states, designing and developing surveillance cameras, imaging systems, sensors and related motion control technologies. General Dynamics, based in Virginia, employs approximately 92,900 people worldwide.

All is not settled however and a number of groups have challenged the takeover, so it may yet founder.

It is not core law enforcement but their Schweizer 333 helicopters were painted in 'conspicuity' blue and yellow so there was a tenuous link. But now TAMS [Total Air Management Services] at Sheffield City Airport have gone.

Until 2005 the utility management patrols were undertaken by **Sterling Helicopters** based at Norwich, Norfolk using a fleet of Bell 206. Sterling lost the contract to TAMS. A few years on and TAMS closed down with the Schweizer helicopters and the utility contract reverting to Sterling and joining their existing police and air ambulance contracts. Ultimately TAMS, are part of the same Longmint Group that also includes Fast Helicopters and Alan Mann so the move is an internal reshuffle.

Cobham's synthetic vision glass cockpit has been approved for single-pilot IFR operation of the Bell 412 helicopter by the FAA with the granting of a supplemental type certificate to Arrow Aviation. This marks the world's first IFR approval for a synthetic vision system in a helicopter. The Search and Rescue unit of North Slope Borough, Alaska will be the first customer to have Cobham's electronic flight instrument system (EFIS) installed on a 412.



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Arrow Aviation, the completion centre responsible for installation of Cobham's EFIS, was selected to complete the 412 retrofit based on its proven track record of successful avionics equipment installations and superior ongoing maintenance and service.

The North Slope Borough 412 performs medevac, search & rescue, and emergency missions in the rigorous environment of Alaska's North Slope. Working across diverse coastal and inland topography, the Bell 412 uses the synthetic vision three-dimensional graphic technology to translate the terrain ahead of and around the helicopter into an intuitive, real-time visual picture, helping the pilot "see" aircraft position in relation to its surroundings regardless of darkness or weather conditions. This display reduces instrument scanning and pilot fatigue by consolidating readings of all primary flight instruments into one efficient tool, resulting in a dramatically reduced pilot workload and safer execution of flight plans and procedures.

Features of the Cobham EFIS include: advanced, four-screen glass cockpit package – two Primary Flight Displays (PFD) and two Multi-Function Displays (MFD); enhanced situational awareness via 3D Synthetic Vision; Helicopter Terrain Awareness and Warning System (HTAWS); full-function Flight Management System (FMS); Highway-In-The-Sky (HITS) Predictive Flight Director; user-definable approaches, geo-referenced hover vector with "mark-on-target" functionality; Remote Bugs Panel (RBP); IFR approved with Cat-A capability; NVG compatibility; digital flight recording; intuitive audio and visual warning and advisory systems; traffic display from TAS, TCAS-I/II, and ADS-B; integrated GPS/WAAS (Global Positioning System/Wide Area Augmentation System), and an Air Data and Attitude Heading Reference System (ADAHRS). Supported WSI Weather products include NEXRAD Weather Radar, Echo Tops, Graphical METARs, Textual METARs, Textual TAFs, Lightning, SIGMETs/AIRMETs, TFRs, and Winds/Temps aloft; ADS-B datalink display functions, including TIS-B (traffic) and FIS-B (flight information, including weather).

Scandinavian Safety Training Centre AB, SSTCAB, is the first and so far only Swedish company to offer air safety training with a focus on UWE, underwater escape, for crews and passengers. In the last three years, the company has provided training for, among others, FFK, Voluntary Flying Corps, the Swedish Coast Guard's RIB group and the Swedish Police Service's National Task Force. A simpler single-seat simulator the "SWET chair" has been used so far but now they have taken a step up.

The company has not only built its own training facility, which includes accommodation for course attendees, classrooms and a specially equipped training pool. The facility on the island of Källringön on the Swedish West Coast now also includes the world's first generation III HUET, the so-called MWH-6 simulator for Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET).

Until this May Swedish pilots had to go abroad to get this type of training, using the older generation of HUET simulators. Now that the company has a generation III HUET, Swedish pilots can get their training in Sweden, and in Swedish.

Lamor Subsystems, Finland, developed the third generation of simulators for this type of air safety training.

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Bavaria Police with
Zeiss LEO camera

Carl Zeiss Optronics [previously Denel] is celebrating 10 years of trusted service of LEO Airborne Observation Systems to law enforcement and other agencies. While the highly reliable LEO-II remains in service with police air support units around the world, the next generation LEO-III-HD continues the proud tradition.

The LEO-III-HD represents a step-change in law enforcement and homeland security observation capability and can simultaneously be equipped with up to nine high performance sensors. These sensors are designed and manufactured by Carl Zeiss Optronics and feature exclusively Zeiss optics.

Of particular interest is the system's ability to read vehicle registration plates in complete darkness at altitudes up to 1500 feet, while the system's on-board, real-time data processing capabilities provide unprecedented image enhancement options including image fusion. Both the daylight TV zoom and spotter cameras feature 4 focal plane arrays that offer the unique capability to view points of interest from the visible colour range up to the Near Infra-red range. The modular design of the sensor pack offer customers optimum flexibility in choosing a system configuration ideally suited to their operational conditions and budgets.

Diamond Aircraft Industries received EASA certification for the DA42NG powered by the 168hp Austro Engine AE 300 engines on March 12. The company is now working on the certification of the new Multi Purpose Platform [MPP] using the increased-power rated AE 300 engines and expects European certification this year. This innovative sensor platform will be launched under a new designation as the DA42 MNG. Earlier types including the DA42MPP will be offered retrofit to the new engine standard after certification.

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Meanwhile the DA42 MPP continues in series production for civil and military applications worldwide.

With the departure of Diamond co-CEO Ing. Wolfgang Grumeth, in favour of becoming the CEO of Airborne Technologies in May Diamond Aircraft Industries the company has seen some changes in personnel but generally all the earlier commercial partnerships remain in place.

Maritime surveillance has been added as a new field of expertise the collaboration with RIEGL Laser Measurement Systems will be intensified, as will efforts for hyper spectral imaging research and development. The satellite transmission cooperation with SCOTTY will be expanded and the use of a range of HDTV line of sight links will be developed with Riedel Communications.

The death of two people in a light aircraft crash in southern Lower Austria turned out to be significant in the Diamond story.

The aircraft smashed into forest and was completely destroyed. There were no survivors. Shortly afterwards it was announced that Mr Florian Wicke the designate managing director of Diamond Airborne Sensing and one of his colleagues had also died.

On June 6, Northampton based aviation company **Sloane Helicopters** hosted a Triple Celebration at Sywell Aerodrome. This commemorated the Company's 40th anniversary, the 20th anniversary of their Sywell Aerodrome headquarters, along with the recent completion of a new building extension, which incorporates a new flying school, a flight training simulator and a new stores department, together with additional modern offices, essential for the continued expansion of the Company.

The Company's 40-year journey started in 1969 when David George founded Sloane Helicopters with one Agusta Bell 47J helicopter. After five years of operating Hiller 12Es and Bell 47s, Sloane was appointed the UK distributor for Hughes Helicopters. In 1976, the Company was made the sole UK distributor for Robinson Helicopters.

On the June 6 1989, Sloane opened its current premises at Sywell Aerodrome. In 1992 Sloane was approved as a Customer Service Facility for Bell Helicopters, and in 1995 Sloane was made the sole UK and Ireland distributor for Agusta helicopters. This was fol-

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lowed by the opening of a training facility in Mallorca, and, in 2007, a maintenance operation in Ireland.

Sloane has remained in the private ownership of its Chairman, David George. It has grown and established itself as one of the best respected and leading helicopter companies in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The celebratory occasion was held at Hangar One, which is situated in the heart of Northamptonshire, overlooking the grass runways of Sywell Aerodrome. Hangar One was considered as the ideal venue for the Triple Celebration, as it not only has excellent airfield facilities, but it is also the site where Sloane operations originated in 1971. The interior of the hangar was professionally decorated specifically for the event to support the re-aligned corporate image and branding of Sloane Helicopters.

The event commenced with the arrival of guests from 1,000 invited to help celebrate the occasion with Sloane employees. Poor weather conditions prohibited a large number of aircraft owners, pilots and operators to fly to the event. Guests were drawn from a wide variety of people who have had an association with the Company over the past forty years.

The guests enjoyed a buffet lunch and a variety of entertainment provided by artistes including Illusionists and Caricaturists.

Sloane operates a fleet of Robinson and Agusta Helicopters, to include the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance and the Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland Air Ambulance. Sloane Helicopters off site support includes the three A109 Powers operated by 32 (The Royal) Squadron, Dyfed Powys Police and the Empire Test Pilots School.



FLIR Systems has acquired the stock of Salvador Imaging, Inc., a leading provider of high-performance visible and low light imaging systems, for \$13M cash.

Salvador Imaging, based in Colorado Springs, Colorado, has earned a world-wide reputation for supplying innovative low light cameras for many applications. The acquisition of Salvador will enhance and differentiate FLIR's multi-sensor systems for military customers and expand its security and surveillance product offerings to commercial customers. Salvador's 12 and 14-bit modular camera designs utilize charge-coupled device (CCD) and electron-multiplying charge-coupled device (EMCCD) sensors, at speeds in excess of 100 million frames per second. In addition to operating at high speeds and with low light, these EMCCD cameras provide colour and monochrome images.

Since the progress from analogue video to High Definition Video from the major airborne surveillance camera suppliers there has not been an airborne video recorder that could capture the high quality video from these systems.

Aero-Optical based in the UK is now offering the HD-DVFAR to compliment the High Definition systems footage and save the recorded data to commercially available solid state, compact flash media. These cards can be removed from the recorder and viewed on a PC or MAC as required.

Compatible with FLIR, WESCAM and other HD systems the HD-DVFAR accepts and auto detects SD and HD signals and stereo 24bit audio and records at the press of a button.

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Four compact flash slots recording at 50 mbps or 100 mbps, with user selectable quality, can offer typical recording lengths of 2.5hrs @100Mbps or 5hrs @50 Mbps using a 32GB cards in each of the four slots. www.Aero-optical.com



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ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

4 June 2009 Bell OH-58 Arkansas National Guard operating with Arkansas State Police. The helicopter carrying three people crashed on the Marion and Searcy County Line at Buffalo Point on the Buffalo National River. Arkansas State Police Special Agent Kevin Brown, assigned to the departments Criminal Investigation Division, was among the law enforcement personnel onboard an ANG helicopter. He was transported to hospital for examination. The other unnamed individual was a member of the 20th District Drug Task Force. The helicopter was being used in a mission associated with an on-going criminal investigation. The aircraft departed from its base at Camp Robinson and stopped in Clinton, Ark. to pick up the law enforcement officers. The aircraft left Clinton at approximately 12:45 p.m. and the pilot called Camp Robinson Operations at 1:30 to report the incident. [Media]

4 June 2009 Hughes OH6A N6641D. US Department of Homeland Security [Border Patrol]. Landed hard at Benson, Arizona. No injuries. [FAA]

7 June 2009 F/W Twin. C-???? Air ambulance. The pilot was killed flying the aircraft. It crashed while on its way to perform a medical evacuation in rural Labrador. The plane was believed to be travelling to Port Hope Simpson, where it was scheduled to pick up a patient destined for St. Anthony, on Newfoundland's Northern Peninsula. The wreckage was discovered in a wooded area about six kilometres west of Port Hope Simpson in southeast Labrador. [Canwest News]

10 June 2009 Agusta A109E N606SP. New Mexico State Police. Aircraft reported missing whilst on a SAR mission in high ground in New Mexico. The helicopter went missing shortly after its crew rescued a lost female hiker, university student Megumi Yamamoto, in the Santa Fe Ski Area. The pilot, Sgt. Andrew Tingwall of Santa Fe, radioed that he hit the mountain in his last radio transmission. A spotter, 29-year-old state patrolman Wesley Cox also from Santa Fe, was also aboard. Rescuers found Cox first, he was suffering from extreme hypothermia. Tingwall and the girl died. [Media]

10 June 2009 Beech King Air ZS-???? An air ambulance flying from Cape Town to East London had to make an emergency landing on Wednesday at Lanseria International Airport north of Johannesburg. The plane's front wheel had failed to retract properly and the pilot elected to land at the airport west of Pretoria rather than fly on to East London. He landed on a runway parallel to the main runway with emergency fire tenders and ambulances in attendance. Witnesses said the plane landed normally on approach but, as the nose came down, the front undercarriage failed to support its weight and the plane slid, apparently under control, for about 200m before coming to a halt. [Media]

10 June 2009. Eurocopter BK117C1 N317MC. Air ambulance of Mayo Clinic Medical Transport operated by Omniflight Helicopters Inc. Rochester based Mayo One was enroute with a patient, two medical crew members and pilot from Decorah, IA to Rochester, MN. About 10 minutes into the patient transport leg, the low oil pressure light for engine # 2 illuminated. The pilot confirmed the low oil pressure on the corresponding gauge and immediately notified the crew as he shut the engine down. The pilot located the closest airport at Fillmore County. The oil leak is suspected to be coming from the midsection of the #2 engine. [Concern]

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15 June 2009 Bell 222 N. Air ambulance Mercy Air The helicopter en route to pick up a patient made a precautionary landing near the Cajon Pass due to a mechanical malfunction and then was stranded for about 12 hours over a weekend. A warning light indicated low hydraulic pressure when they were only 100 feet off the ground from the scheduled landing site, pilots landed safely but were unable to transport the patient.

16 June 2009 Eurocopter EC145 N885AL. Air ambulance of AirLink Critical Care Transport of Bend, Oregon. Operated by Metro Aviation. The EC145 was en-route to St. Charles Medical Center, Bend with a patient on board when the #1 engine oil chip caution light illuminated. The helicopter emergency procedure (EP) was followed resulting in a successful "fuzz burn" elimination of the cause of the caution, and the flight continued. Approximately two minutes later the #1 engine oil chip caution illuminated again and would not extinguish with the EP-guided second "fuzz burn". The pilot shut down the #1 engine and conducted an uneventful single engine landing on a primary runway at nearby Redmond Airport. An emergency was not declared. [Concern]

18 June 2009 Bell 206L4 N314AE. Air ambulance of Air Evac EMS at Parkersburg, West Virginia. The crew was lifting from a scene about 30 miles east of Parkersburg, and experienced a wire strike with the main rotor blade. The pilot executed a precautionary landing without incident, on the highway. [Concern/media/FAA]

20 June 2009 Bell of San Diego Fire Rescue. Wind from a rescue helicopter performing a flyover during the San Diego County Fair caused a concession sign to bend and nearly fall near spectators. The helicopter was flying 250 to 300 feet over the fairgrounds. [Media]

29 June 2009. MD500E N95?CP. Cleveland Police Department, Ohio. The helicopter flown by Officer Art Fantroy was forced to make an emergency landing after the engine failed en route to Columbus. He put it down between two trailer homes on a farm about 20 miles south of Mansfield. No one was injured and the aircraft was not damaged. [Media]

RECENT EVENTS

There will be a supplement reporting on the recent Paris Air Show published shortly.



The bi-annual 2009 edition of BGAD (UK Business & General Aviation Day) took place in reasonable weather [well it was not raining all the time!] at Marshall Cambridge Airport, on June 9.

BGAD is free to attend, but the organisers ask all visitors to register online beforehand and the result is a light atmosphere to talk business.

In the past the event has attracted a broad spectrum of the aviation industry but on this occasion no one could be over surprised that the overpowering theme was business aviation



and seeking employment for the business aircraft somewhat marooned by the ongoing financial problems. There is business out there but new thinking is needed to attract it.

On a commercial basis some aviation organisations seem on occasion to lose sight of reality. I recently needed to find a different helicopter operator to provide [potentially very lucrative] Helicopter Flights attraction at a major event.

Completely flying in the face of a decade of experience one very well known south Hertfordshire operator would only supply the helicopter after the hirer put up £2,000 with a view to receiving a negligible return. In the event it did not take long to find and negotiate a sensible arrangement with an Essex operator willing to take a small commercial risk. In the event it was the risk taker that was able to count on two days employment for an airframe, pilot and four support staff and a significant profit. One result appears on page 5 of this edition. Thank you Excel.

BGAD coincided with the 90th anniversary of Cambridge Airport and Marshall's organised a special fly past of aircraft associated with the airport in the afternoon.

AEROEXPO 2009

There may well be a recession in full flow but you would never guess it from the attendance at this years Aeroexpo at Wycombe Air Park west of London. This event grows and grows – and as you are probably aware it has an alter ego in Prague earlier in the year.

But its a General Aviation show and nothing to do with the emergency services' is the usual defensive cry, and in truth its pretty much on the nose. But, as usual, the show is actually a mix and there is plenty to see that is wholly relevant to all aspects of aviation. You may need to trip over a large number of plane spotters but in the end it is the buying activities of this sector of the industry that makes such events viable for the professionals. Even a GA show is a window on the world.

The Aeroexpo mix is primarily about General rather than corporate aviation—there are no airframes with the price tags associated with the jets at BGAD simply because they cannot fly in to the grass airfield at Wycombe — but there the gap stops. Some of the hardware on

site is heavy metal enough. The Pilatus PC-12 and Agusta A119 representing a significant investment for exhibitors and visitors alike.

Red Box, normally associated with light battery powered GPUs, took the opportunity to launch the Austrian AirLift at AeroExpo.

Red Box say that the AirLift is a piece of equipment that no crowded hanger should be without. It is designed to elevate an aircraft off the ground enabling you to park two aircraft in one space. As well as being an excellent space saving device, it also enables you to easily access the underbelly of the aircraft for maintenance or cleaning. Additionally while parked in the lifted position, the aircraft is out of harms way from other aircraft in the hanger, meaning no bumps, scrapes or scratches.

The AirLift is capable of lifting most aircraft up to 1350kg (2980lbs) and is suitable for helicopters, nose wheel aircraft, tail wheel aircraft, being of high, mid and low wing configuration.

The system is easily constructed and can be expected to be operational within half a day of delivery. The Airlift is not fixed to the ground in anyway. Using the optional wheel kit it can be moved and re-sited with relative ease.



In view of the developments at Birmingham International last month – the torching of the West Midlands police EC135 by a motorcycle gang – it perhaps be seen as an abrasive move by Paul Casebourne to leave his shiny BMW motorbike in front of his exhibit at Wycombe! In truth though he was totally unaware of the police loss.

What he brought to the show was engineering solutions, the greatest of these being perhaps an answer for air units with no home to go to.

In a striking display Engineered Solutions of Newcastle exhibited an Italian sourced building that can be a hangar that offers an range of cover options ranging from basic to near bomb proof. As with all things, the ultimate level of protection chosen by the customer relates to the depth of the purse.

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The Kopron design is basically a steel braced fabric structure that offers a range of options including permanence if required and an ability to partially retract. Designed as a warehouse affording a temporary or permanent expansion of an existing store the capabilities of the building have already embraced aircraft hangarage – as exhibited at the Wycombe event.

Who knows, perhaps if the observation of the WM police air unit – either over the fence or via Google Earth – had shown it had some kind of structure to call home they may have left the idea of an attack off the agenda.



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Engineered Solutions based in Newcastle upon Tyne offer a wide range of engineering answers to questions you may not have yet raised—as can be seen from the image on the previous page.

The Italian sourced Kopron storage building offers a semi-retractable all weather cover that can be upgraded several levels to make it proof again more than the vagaries of the English weather.

The structural members are seen here as a mix of fixed units and collapsing scissors.

Skyforce—Honeywell/Bendix-King—have moved on from their all red exhibition stand to a crisp white version.



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DIARY

6-11 July 2009 Aeromedical Certification Course, to be held at Hospital ABC, Sante Fe, Mexico. Spanish language course for those in the aeromed field, including pilots and administrators. Certified under FAA and OACI regulations.

The 40 hour course contains three modules and a variety of practical workshops with helicopter medical staff and a visit to hangars of the government in Toluca [tbc].

Organised by Manny Nunez of ALSAM, USA but hosted by Dr. Hector Lopez at Hospital ABC in Sante Fe. Contact number: (55) 52308000 –Ext 8593, 8594 or + 1 562 746 9442 in the USA.

7-9 July 2009 ACPO APA Annual Conference and International Policing Exhibition. The exhibition will be held from the 8-9 July 2009 with the closed conference for ACPO and APA officials running alongside it from 7-9 July 2009. The exhibition and the conference are both being held in the same venue at Manchester Central (formerly Manchester G-Mex) in the heart of Manchester. If you have any colleagues who would also be interested in attending the event and would like to be added to the mailing list please contact s.barnes@hgluk.co.

22-25 July 2009 Airborne Law Enforcement Association (ALEA) 39th Annual Conference and Exposition. Savannah International Trade & Convention Center, Savannah, Georgia. Link: <http://www.alea.org/public/seminars/annualConference/2009/TOC.asp>



Another potential answer to unwanted guests presented itself at the annual DVD [Defence Vehicles Day] at Milbrook? The Oldbury moveable steel doorway. In the end though it is currently too heavy and clumsy to allow the swift launch of a secured helicopter on a remote pad.

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