

Police Aviation News

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2006

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IPAR

BUNCEFIELD

*- a suitable case
for inter-agency
co-operation*



EDITORIAL

Only a matter of weeks after it became clear that the fire brigades of Britain had yet again failed to come to grips with renewed and expensive industry pressure upon them to acquire their own air support a major fire thrust upon them a clear message that there are instances where some fire air support is the way to go.

In this instance—at a major oil depot at Buncefield [see cover and pages 7-9] - the police were on hand to supply aircraft, sensors and downlink receivers so little time or effort was lost. Fire departments will again turn their backs on the technology until some other event calling for their untrained staff to learn on the spot is thrust upon them. Next time it could be a case of widespread terror attacks and no spare police capacity to assist other agencies.

Is it beyond the wit of the Home Office to provide a start. A dedicated national fire helicopter operation, even old role equipped police machines to train staff and evolve best practice, over a long period would be an economic beginning.

Surely there is a better way than continuing to do nothing.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

INTERNATIONAL: It has been proposed that robotic patrol boats be used to safeguard the seas from piracy and fight ocean-going people traffickers.

Recently the passengers aboard the Seabourn Spirit, a luxury liner sailing off the coast of Somalia, came face to face with the dangers of piracy, a planned assault and ocean hijacking using fast boats and sophisticated weapons.

With the pirates going hi-tech, so ships must use more advanced technology in their defence.

Anti-piracy technologies include an unmanned spy plane, the Inventus UAV, for aerial surveillance of risky waters. Others include Secure-Ship, a 9,000 volt electric fence intended to stop pirates from boarding, and ShipLoc, a hidden tagging device for ships that allows satellites to track ships on behalf of their owners even after a hijacking.

To defend themselves the Seabourn Spirit's crew used an acoustic weapon that focused a deafening alarm sound on the attackers, hastening their retreat.

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Marine Robotics have created vessels called Ghost Guard which can patrol the seas along pre-programmed routes, overseen by a single, human controller on shore. The boats can also escort other ships through dangerous waters. Video and other equipment on board these robotic ships allow their on-shore controllers to see and interact with the crew of any vessels they encounter: [BBC]

CANADA

Further to a report on page 2 of the May 2005 edition the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's Vancouver Air Section in British Columbia has reported the delivery of their new Eurocopter EC120B Colibri helicopter. It will be dedicated to urban patrol duties over the 18 municipalities of the Greater Vancouver area, serving a total population of approximately two million. The aircraft joins an AS350B3, Pilatus PC-12 and two other fixed-wing aircraft at this base.

Particular emphasis is to be given to traffic safety and enforcement roles, notably safe management of police pursuits, deterrence of organised street racing, and detection of impaired and aggressive drivers. The aircraft will also be involved in assisting with tracking stolen vehicles and safely arresting the occupants. The aircraft is expected to be in full service by February.

The aircraft is to be flown and maintained by RCMP personnel, with the tactical flight officer duties shared between RCMP officers and the Vancouver Police Department. [PLE RCMP]



CHINA

China will have an air police force with some 60 helicopters during the 11th Five-year Plan Period (2006-2010).

Experts from the Air Force, the Ministry of Public Security and other departments concerned have concluded that the research program on China police helicopter fleet has laid a good foundation for the development of helicopters for police.

The research programme, started in 2003, covered aircraft acquisition, base construction, personnel, airspace use, management and budget. [People's Daily]

COLOMBIA

As predicted the Government of Colombia has signed a contract to acquire 25 Embraer Super Tucano aircraft for US\$235M. This is Embraer's first Super Tucano export deal. The aircraft acquired by Colombia will be operated by the country's Air Force in internal security

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and border patrol missions. The Colombian Air Force (FAC) currently operates 14 of the earlier Tucano basic trainer aircraft purchased in the 1990s.

The Super Tucano is already in service with the Brazilian Air Force (FAB) undertaking similar duties in the Amazon Surveillance Program (SIVAM) in conjunction with eight Embraer-built Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft. [Embraer]

ESTONIA

The Border Guard signed a contract for an AB139 with option for an additional aircraft late in November. The Ministry of the Interior launched the state tender competition for the acquisition of a helicopter for the Border Guard on 28 June 2005 and the AB139 was judged the only helicopter that met the conditions set out in the tender.

The Border Guard helicopter will carry out patrols over the whole of Estonia. It will be based in Tallin. The AB139 is capable of carrying up to 15 passengers or six litters with four medical attendants at the highest speed, in the most spacious cabin and with the best power reserve of any helicopter in the medium twin-engine class. [AB]

Ed: At the time this requirement was put out to industry, in June, Kamov were reporting that Estonia was looking at their Ka-226 helicopter as it took part in the joint exercise held by Russian, Finnish and Estonian Frontier Services near Vyborg.

FRANCE

Three convicts broke out of a prison in eastern France aboard a helicopter hijacked from a nearby airport on December 10.

Two armed men hijacked the helicopter in Albertville in the French Alpine region as it was about to take off to pick up skiers in the Alps and forced the pilot to fly to a prison about 10 minutes away. The helicopter landed in the courtyard and three prisoners clambered aboard.

The five men later fled on foot, taking the pilot's telephone and radio, after the aircraft landed in open country near the city of Grenoble.

At least ten helicopter escapes have been recorded in France since 1981. In this latest incident the courtyard of the prison at Aiton had no security mesh to prevent such incidents. [M]

GEORGIA



Enstrom Helicopter delivered the Republic of Georgia's 'Airclub of Georgia' a searchlight equipped Enstrom 280FX helicopter with a police surveillance mission in mind. The Police division, of the Ministry of Interior, is considering broadening their airborne police presence and is looking at the possibility of a fleet of Enstrom's to serve throughout the Republic of Georgia. [Enstrom]

Ed: Not a great deal is known of law enforcement operations in Georgia. In August 1999 the US Defence Secretary confirmed plans to supply ten UH-1H helicopters to the Defence Ministry. Two more came from Turkey but some of the 12 were for spares. Part of the task of these helicopters was border patrol. In September 2002 a Mil Mi-2 of the Georgian Border Guards crashed during a training flight after the crew apparently lost control.

ISRAEL

Taking advantage of Israeli innovations in the field of unmanned drones for military use, Israel's traffic police deployed a UAV for the second occasion on December 28. The craft monitored roads in a limited experiment in law enforcement. [INN]

KUWAIT

Kuwait has obtained two new 'Dolphin' helicopters for the Interior Ministry. The ministry operates an air department that helps in border security and the monitoring of suspected Islamic insurgents. [Middle East Newline]

Ed: Kuwait has operated Eurocopter helicopters for some time. In the past examples of the SA330 and SA342K have been noted since the early 1990's. The Dolphin helicopters mentioned are believed to be examples of the AS365N Dauphin.

MALTA

The Armed Forces of Malta Air Squadron undertakes all security aspects for the islands and was originally a police air arm. In December it was reported that three new pilots have been awarded their pilot wings. Bombardier Oliver Bennett, Gunner Reuben Demicoli and Gunner Mark Cassar were declared helicopter pilots by AFM Commander, Brigadier Carmel Vassallo at a ceremony held at the Air Squadron.

The soldiers recently completed an *ab initio* helicopter pilot training course at the Air Squadron, following a thorough pilot candidate selection process from within the AFM's ranks.

The men then underwent ground schooling on meteorology, law and navigation. Flight training consisted of 60 hours' flight time on the Air Squadron's Bell-47G2 helicopter theoretical and practical examinations on the Bell helicopter conducted by Italian Air Force flight examiners. [Malta Media]



PALESTINE

Russia is reported to be donating a number of armoured vehicles and two Mil Mi-17 helicopters to Palestine. [Media]

The Mil helicopters will replace three donated Mi-17M machines operated by the Palestine Police from the mid-1990's until they were destroyed in an Israeli air attack in December 2001.

SOUTH AFRICA

The latest AS350B3 for the South African Police Service [SAPS] joins 6 helicopters of this type and is the eighth delivered to the SAPS. The AS350 B3 made its maiden flight on 3 March 1997 and is powered by a Turbomeca Arriel 2B engine developing 847hp and controlled by a dual channel FADEC (Full Authority Digital Engine Control).

It may be something of a middle aged bird, but the Ecureuil/AStar/Twinstar/Squirrel family continues to attract a large number of customers. The basic airframe first flew on in June 1974, 31 years ago, but thanks to regularly updating its characteristics have been con-

stantly upgraded to improve performance, enhance safety and attract a wide range of customers. The wide-body stretch EC130B4/AS350B4 is just another option in the range.

A total of 432 of the high-performance AS350B3 are currently in operational service worldwide – just one variant of 3,719 such helicopters, all versions combined, to have been sold. They have now logged 15 million flight hours in 91 countries for 1,531 customers. [ECSA]



UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON: A special presentation took place in London on December 19 to thank the emergency and transport services following the bomb attacks in the capital on July 7, 2005 this year.

Presentations were made by the London mayor on behalf of the people of London to the Metropolitan, City and British transport police forces; the London fire brigade; the bus and tube services; the London ambulance and Air ambulance services; and the receiving hospitals.

The July 7th terrorist attacks on three tube trains and a London bus killed 56 people and injured many more. [DeHavilland Information Services]



BK117C2/EC145 c/n 9065 and 9068 on the Donauworth production line. Images via MPS

The latest Eurocopter EC145/BK117C2 c/n 9075 D-HMBE for the Metropolitan Police arrived in the UK in the middle of December. The helicopter routed from the German factory via Ostend to overnight at McAlpine's in Oxford prior to flying to the company's facility in the North West for storage. This places all three of the Metropolitan Police new helicopters [9065, 9068 and 9075] in the UK awaiting completion of the contract details. It is expected that they will become G-MPSA, MPSB and MPSC in the due course of time.



CHILTERN: A major oil depot fire at the Buncefield Oil Depot, Hemel Hempstead north of London blazed for three days and caused severe damage. A huge plume of thick, black smoke rose higher than 10,000 feet as it drifted southwest. The blasts, heard up to 100 miles (160 km) away, had initially raised fears of a possible repeat of the deadly wave of suicide bombings in London in July.

Contrary to initial fears, there was no indication that the column of black smoke was either highly toxic or coming back down to earth – although on that count it was perhaps fortunate that the weather remained clear without rain. Said to be the largest fire peacetime Europe has seen, it was fortunately the result of an ‘out-of-hours’ explosion and did not lead to deaths.

Britain's worst oil fire disaster was the 1988 blaze aboard the North Sea Piper Alpha rig in which 167 workers died but a more comparable event – a large explosion at the Nypro (UK) chemical plant at Flixborough on June 1, 1974 - led to twenty-eight workers being killed and a further 36 injured. Eighteen fatalities occurred in the control room as a result of the windows shattering and the collapse of the roof. No one escaped from the control room. The fires burned for several days and after ten days those that still raged were hampering the rescue work. In its time the Flixborough explosion was the largest-ever peacetime explosion in the UK.



Flixborough took place late on a Saturday afternoon and it was recognised that the number of casualties would have been more if the incident had occurred on a weekday, as the main office block was not occupied. Offsite consequences resulted in fifty-three reported injuries. Property in the surrounding area was damaged to a varying degree.



In comparison the effect of the recent operation lasted a far shorter period and caused no fatalities but was similarly fortunate in that it occurred when the numbers of persons in the vicinity was low. The devastation to a large number of unoccupied adjoining businesses would have altered the whole appreciation of the incident if the explosion had taken place 36 hours earlier or later.

Buncefield drew together a massive inter-agency response which directly involved the drawing together of Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Police, Dacorum Borough Council, the Health Protection

Agency, the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive. In addition a number of other agencies – including other fire brigades and the Metropolitan Police in London - were drawn in at various times

Since officers were alerted to the blaze at the oil depot at around 6am on Sunday December 11 more than 400 police officers and a large number of police staff were involved in the emergency response. At any one time, around 150 police officers were on duty to maintain cordons, carry out security and high-visibility patrols, perform traffic duties and provide assistance to those members of the public displaced by the blast.

With the continued absence of fire brigade operated aircraft, primary air support relied on the police resources of the Eurocopter EC135T2 helicopters operated by the Chiltern air unit based at London [Luton] International Airport and RAF Benson, Oxford. These provided aerial support and imaging of the fire and its devastating effect.

But it was not just a Chiltern effort, when the Benson EC135 arrived at 9am on the first day it was relieving a Metropolitan Police AS355N that had already taken a fire chief over the site on a visual reconnaissance of the blaze. During the next few days Chiltern aircraft worked closely with the Fire Service by down linking images from their daylight and thermal image camera to a mobile receiver. This enabled the

FLIXBOROUGH

At about 16:53 hours on Saturday 1 June 1974 the Nypro (UK) site at Flixborough, Lincolnshire, was severely damaged by a large explosion. Twenty-eight workers were killed and a further 36 suffered injuries. Offsite there were consequences resulted in fifty-three reported injuries.

Two months earlier, in late March, a vertical crack was found in in reactor No.5 and it was leaking cyclohexane. The plant was subsequently shutdown for an investigation. The investigation that followed identified a serious problem with the reactor and the decision was taken to remove it and install a bypass assembly to connect reactors No.4 and No.6 so that the plant could continue production.

Following a fire in an 8 inch pipe nearby a 20 inch bypass system ruptured during the afternoon of June 1. The rupture resulted in the escape of a large quantity of cyclohexane. The cyclohexane formed a flammable mixture and subsequently found a source of ignition. At about 16:53 hours there was a massive vapour cloud explosion which caused extensive damage and started numerous fires on the site.



Devastation at Buncefield as viewed from the Chiltern Air Support helicopter. Above are the remains of businesses with no association with the depot other than they were sited nearby. On the left illustrates the massive runs of hoses laid out to bring water into the site.

fire units on-site to 'see which tanks were likely to be a problem and which were already a problem!'

Compared to Flixborough it did not take a long while, fire fighters made steady progress in attempts to bring the fire under control. Despite swirling winds hampering operations, fire fighters from 17 different forces finally brought the fire to heel by dousing the flames with a foam and water concentrate. Some delays were caused when confusion regarding the contents of some unstable tanks forced fire fighters to halt their efforts. Crews resumed their work after aerial pictures showed which parts of the site were safe to enter. The fuel in the suspect tank was later identified as the aviation fuel AVTUR.

More than 2,000 people in the immediate vicinity were evacuated and 43 people were injured in the blasts, two of them seriously. However, all but one casualty was quickly released from hospital. A large number of businesses close to the explosion were devastated with a number being untenable even after the fire was doused. The area immediately around the Buncefield depot was a charred wasteland of burnt out cars, shattered trees and scorched grass as a result of the blasts.

Sections of the main M1 motorway from London to the north and the M10 feeder close to the blast site were closed on occasion until the level of risk was assessed as safe. In addition in the immediate aftermath of the explosion Hertfordshire county council closed a number of local schools, day centres and other public services amid concerns about the local population's health.

The Buncefield oil depot, a major distribution terminal operated by Total and part-owned by Texaco, supplies airports and petrol stations across the region with oil, petrol and kerosene. The depot supplied petrol and fuel oils to a large part of southeast England, including Luton and Heathrow airports. When full it held 5% of Britain's oil supply and was the fifth largest in Britain.

The knock-on effect on airlines operating out of London [Heathrow] Airport – to which there was a direct pipeline connection – was predicted to last into the New Year. In addition the level of threat to domestic fuel supplies in the region fluctuated with the ability to transport in supplies from other regions. The media made much of the threat of a fuel shortage but little concrete evidence of it was evident. [DeHavilland / HertsPol / Chiltern ASU / IPAR]



WALES

A 'Best Value' review conducted jointly by Gwent Police and South Wales Police has been hailed as an example of 'collaboration' in its purest form. The review focussed upon the provision of an effective air support service to the communities of the South Wales and Gwent Police Areas.

Briefly, the review looked at:

- The current service provided and future needs (to include demand, cover required, location and the possibility of future income generation)
- The financial constraints – including a cost/benefit analysis of purchasing the helicopter, as opposed to the current leasing arrangements
- Method of service provision, including exploring wider collaborative arrangements – such as working with other emergency services and agencies
- resources and facilities including staff locations, civilianisation of 'police' posts, technological developments, training and health and safety issues

The Air Consortium (a partnership between Gwent and South Wales Police Forces) is examining the impact of changes to Home Office funding arrangements, and the feasibility of including Dyfed Powys Police in a three-Force consortium for the provision of air support services, which may lead to a more efficient air support service. [Gwent Police]

Ed: Dyfed-Powys currently operates their own Agusta A109E Power helicopter from police HQ in Carmarthen. Gwent and South Wales operate a leased AS355F2 from Veritair at Cardiff Heliport as the South & East Wales ASU [S&EW]. There is a current review of air support that appears to be leading towards S&EW purchasing their next helicopter and it looks equally likely that the decision might see the purchase of an Agusta Grand. As the existing forces already support each other operationally such a move would fit in well with a formalised South Wales consortium.

Future complications include the likelihood of an 'All Wales' police service including the North Wales EC135T1 under the proposed revisions to policing in the UK. That proposal itself is not going too well for the Government as many police services and police authorities reject the whole idea of just a few 'super forces.'

UNITED STATES

FEDERAL

The U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 1400 on Thursday, December 8, by voice vote. The legislation would make it a federal crime to aim a laser beam at the cockpit of an airplane or helicopter in flight, punishable by a fine of up to \$250,000 and a five-year prison term. The Senate is expected to consider the measure shortly.

FEDERAL – BORDER PATROL: Although it is said that President Bush wants unmanned drones used along the US-Mexican border as part of his broader immigration initiative border patrol officials are still negotiating with the Federal Aviation Administration about where and when it can deploy the systems.

It took two years of negotiations for the Customs and Border Protection Directorate [CBP] to sort out a deal with the FAA to fly just one drone in the Tucson area in Arizona.

CBP may have issued a positive environmental impact study in September that helps clear the way for an expansion of UAV operations but the agency still needs to work out a deal with the FAA to fly the drones outside restricted military airspace. Because of the restrictions, CBP officials have been forced to deploy a fleet of Blackhawk helicopters to patrol the rest of the southern border.

The agency recently received permission to buy its second UAV early this year and plans to deploy the drone in the same Tucson area until CBP and FAA officials reach additional agreements. An initial contract was signed in September with General Atomics Aeronautical Systems to buy its first UAV and support services for \$14 million. The second UAV is expected to cost half that amount.

The drones provide significant financial savings compared to operating and maintaining helicopters. It costs \$4,000 every time it launches a Blackhawk. The Predator B drones have the capacity to fly 30 consecutive hours without refuelling at 230 miles per hour and over remote land border areas equipped with electro-optic sensors, radar and infrared cameras with downlink facilities to ground controllers. [Congress Daily]

FEDERAL USCG: Luminator have announced the award of a contract from the United States Coast Guard for the design and delivery of a new High Intensity Discharge/Infrared LED Dual Mode Searchlight (HID/IR LED). Under the terms of the contract, Mark IV IDS Luminator will provide engineering development, manufacturing and technical support to the Coast Guard.

The HID/IR LED Dual Mode Searchlight is the solution to the rotor wing industry's need for a dependable, low maintenance searchlight. The new searchlight design employs a HID lamp providing over 3,000 powered hours of white light. This is 40 times longer life than a standard halogen cycle lamp. The searchlight features a ring of IR LEDs which provide over 10,000 hours of use. This is 200 times longer than the IR filtered halogen cycle lamp. Over the life of the searchlight, thousands of dollars will be saved in re-lamping cost alone.

The searchlight design provides no down time or blackout when switching between light sources. The switching process from HID to IR mode is instantaneous. Switching from IR to white light illuminates the HID lamp to 80% power instantaneously, and reaches 100% intensity within 5 seconds. The current design fits the MIL-L81174/2B-2 helicopter searchlight envelope.

In addition to the longer life, the HID/IR LED Dual Mode Searchlight has a significantly lower power draw on the helicopter than traditional dual mode searchlights. The HID lamp draws only 55 watts, and the IR LED draws a mere 20 watts. The circuitry, including motors, draws a maximum of 100 watts.



CALIFORNIA: Last month the 25-year-old Hughes 500D helicopter purchased to fight crime in San Joaquin County three years ago was sold after a flurry of online bidding to a North Dakota-based resale firm for \$385,600. The proceeds from the sale will go toward a task force that targets methamphetamine dealers and cleans up the drug-making laboratories often found across the county.

The Sheriff's Office bought the helicopter for \$400,000 in 2002 with a federal meth-fighting grant. The chopper was grounded earlier this year after the grant money could no longer support rising costs for wages, benefits and operations. The grant used to buy the helicopter and fund the task force was cut from \$661,000 in 2004-05 to \$476,000 this year.

The helicopter's sale doesn't mean law enforcement won't have a presence in the sky. A Cessna 206 airplane purchased along with the chopper in 2002 will continue to be used for drug surveillance in the county.

And a non-profit coalition of local police and fire officials has offered to contract with the Sheriff's Office for free helicopter service. Stockton Metro Air Support Inc. recently agreed to assist six local fire agencies on an as-needed basis for river rescues, fighting fires and other search and rescue operations. [media]

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The Washington DC Metropolitan Police Department is adding a second Eurocopter AS350B3 to its fleet. Ordered in September 2005, the MPD's second AS350 is due to enter service in early 2006.

'We've been wanting a second aircraft since our unit was reactivated in 2001,' says Sergeant Steve Smith, one of the MPD's helicopter pilots. 'Now thanks to the efforts of the Mayor's office, our Chief of Police, and other senior officials on the MPD, this goal is about to become a reality.'

Since it was reactivated in February 2001 after being closed for almost five years, the Air Support Unit has been using a single AS350B3 to watch the city from above. During this time, this B3 has flown about 1,000 hours a year over the Capital's 64 square miles.

Equipped with a FADEC - equipped 847 shp Turbomeca Arriel 2B engine, the AS350B3 offers high performance bolstered by enhanced safety and reduced pilot workload thanks to the B3's VEMD multifunction cockpit display. With high performance, ease of flight, and a sling load capacity of more than 3085 lbs, the AS350B3 is the most capable, user-friendly helicopter in its class. [AEC]

FLORIDA: Plans for two emergency services helicopter hangars at Witham Field, Stuart on the Atlantic coast were unanimously approved last month by the Martin County Commission.

The two 8,000-square-foot hangars for the Martin County Sheriff's Office Aviation Section and the local Life Star air ambulance will be near the control tower and cost a total of \$1.8M. They will replace hangars destroyed by hurricanes.

FLORIDA: On current plans by the spring the Volusia County sheriff's helicopter fleet will be operating from its new base in DeLand airport, instead of operating out of a cramped hangar on Coral Sea Avenue at Daytona Beach International Airport.

The Sheriff's Office is buying a hangar with office space at the DeLand Municipal Airport to base not only its fleet of three helicopters, but also related services such as its marine and motorcycle patrols, K-9 corps, and bomb-disposal unit [it already operates some of these out of the Daytona facility]. DeLand is just 14 miles from Daytona.

It has been a long term goal to bring the various components of Special Services under one roof in a facility large enough to house all the equipment and provide the office space needed. The hangar in DeLand presents a perfect opportunity to fulfil those objectives. The building is at the south end of the unused north-south runway and formerly housed TAB Express Inc., a flight school that recently closed.

The site is significantly larger than their present location and includes a 12,000-square-foot hangar and 8,000 square feet of office space costing about \$1.475M - far less than what it would cost to build a comparable facility.

The Sheriff's Office will be asking the County Council for a \$2M loan, repayable from the department's budget, this month.

ILLINOIS: The Countryside Police Department *ILEAS [Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System]* has taken delivery of a Flight Management Systems [FMS] Moving Map System. The fully digital, GIS based, GPS coupled mapping system has been installed in the OH-58 operated by Countryside PD.

The system incorporates some unique technological innovations, and customer driven enhancements. The ability to incorporate the road network for the entire state of Illinois in the map, but search for addresses filtered by proximity to the helicopter, was a challenge. For example, there are over 150 locations called Main Street in Illinois. [FMS]



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NEW MEXICO: A federal judge refused to grant bail to a Rio Rancho man charged with shooting down a Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department helicopter. As a result 29-year-old Jason Kerns will remain in jail until trial.

Kerns is accused of firing a 30.06 rifle at the helicopter on August 6th. The shot hit the craft's left rudder pedal, and it crash-landed in an Albuquerque backyard. Both the pilot and deputy on board were injured. [KOBTV/AP]

NEW YORK: A man and woman who were sharing an intimate moment on a secluded, dark rooftop on August 27, 2004 were being secretly watched and recorded by a police helicopter aerial camera. Police officers were nominally tracking bicycle riders moving through the streets of the Lower East Side without a permit but it seems that four minutes of the resultant recorded footage included the couple on the terrace of a Second Avenue penthouse. The tape broadcast in 2005 by WCBS-TV news showed that although the helicopter followed the riders it turned the camera on the couple shielded from view by a wall of shrubs in the near total darkness. The thermal-imaging equipment yielded distinct, if ghostly, images. At the time it was suspected that they might be in a position to throw projectiles at officers below. In this instance taping was terminated once it was determined a threat did not exist. The scene was disclosed to the public domain only because the same tape included images from the mass bicycle ride and had to be turned over for the trial of a rider.

One of the two people caught on camera was the penthouse owner 51 year old Mr. Rosner, a music business executive. He remembered a police helicopter hovering overhead, but assumed was only monitoring the throng of bicycle riders below. He has now filed a complaint with the Police Department through his lawyer. The woman on the roof with him did not want to be identified or discuss the events. [New York Times]

OREGON: Police in Oregon arrested two Canadian men refuelling at the remote Burns Municipal Airport 90 miles east of the Ontario on the border with Canada and seized almost a half-ton of marijuana. The arrest follows efforts to monitor remote rural airports in the region, checking self-service fuel records to search for clues to illicit operations. Information from those records is now available to federal, state and local law-enforcement agencies via the Oregon Department of Justice's computerised intelligence network. The positive deterrent effect is only expected to be short-lived now that the matter is public domain. [AvWeb]

TENNESSEE: Two months after being sworn in as the police chief in January 2004, Ronal Serpas held a news conference beside one of the Metro Nashville PD's six helicopters to announce his plans to deploy the aircraft as a key component of his fight against motorists who speed through construction zones. The operation uses two MD500E and four ex-military Bell OH58 helicopters.

Nearly two years later, department officials concede that they use the helicopters for traffic enforcement less than once a month. The reversal illustrates the Metro police department's ongoing struggle to figure out how best to use its six-aircraft aviation unit, a unit that came under fire after a 2002 city audit found the department had too many helicopters and too many pilots, potentially wasting taxpayer money.

Metro's aviation unit costs \$264,000 a year to operate in addition to the salaries and benefits for five full-time and one part-time pilot.

The 2002 audit, by MGT of America, found that Metro police maintained more helicopters than several other comparable cities and had no strategic plan detailing the goals of the aviation unit or what resources were needed to meet those goals. The six pilots spent about 10% of their scheduled shifts in the air and some of the aircraft flew rarely, if ever.

Another study by Matrix Consulting Group found otherwise. It determined that if Metro is to maintain an aviation unit, it should increase flying hours and resources to up to 16 hours a day. That recommendation was perceived as too expensive on fuel and maintenance costs. Flight hours have increased over the last two years and in 2004 stood at 1,383 hours. In



2005 the aircraft flew in excess of 1,473 hours, but the department's stated goal is to reach 1,800 hours a year.

Pilot hours increased to 2,093 in 2004, but that included time when not PIC, to raise the flight time to 20% of duty time. [The Tennessean]

Ed: The unit was formed circa 1972 with military surplus types to cover a 533 sq. mile area known as Davidson County. It provides a service covering 20 hours daily 0630 to 0200.

AIR AMBULANCE

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES: The Snowy Hydro Corporation will continue to be the major sponsor of the SouthCare helicopter service in south-east New South Wales despite its planned privatisation.

A local official raised concerns that the sale of the hydro-electric scheme would affect the helicopter's funding.

UNITED KINGDOM

ANGLIA: Sterling Aviation based at Norwich International Airport took delivery of a pre-owned Eurocopter BK117C1 D-HMEC in December. In line with statements made by Sterling in the past the airframe c/n 7538 is expected to replace the current BO106DBS5 air ambulance G-EYNL in the coming weeks. [IPAR]

CHILTERN: The National Consultation on reconfiguring Ambulance Trusts commenced in mid-December 2005. The Royal Berkshire Ambulance NHS Trust (RBAT) is one of thirty one other ambulance trusts to be considered for reconfiguration. The proposal is that RBAT is merged with the three other Ambulance Trusts covering Hampshire, Oxfordshire and the Buckinghamshire element of the Two Shires Ambulance Trust, (previously Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire Ambulance Services).

The Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority (TVSHA) will formally conduct the Public Consultation process on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health. The process will last for fourteen weeks, and all comments received by the Health Authority will be collated and forwarded to the Secretary of State for Health, who will decide on the proposals for reconfiguration.

ESSEX: The Essex Air Ambulance has announced that it will be hosting its first ever overseas trek in aid of the county's emergency helicopter. The charity is looking for enthusiastic fundraisers to take part in a trek of the Himalayas from 6th – 16th April 2007. It is being run by Classic Tours on behalf of the charity and is located in one of nature's most magnificent mountain ranges spreading across South Asia. Participants will be taken to the province of Himachal Pradesh and highlights for fundraisers will include visiting local people, experiencing the fantastic views of the Dhaula Dhar mountain range and visiting Dharamsala, home of the Dalai Lama's monastery.

To take part in the trek participants will need to pay a £250 registration fee and raise a mini-

mum level of sponsorship for the Essex Air Ambulance. A full information evening is being held on Monday 16 January 2006 at the Essex Air Ambulance Appeals Office, The Business Centre, Earls Colne Business Park, Earls Colne.

If you would like to attend the information evening or if you would like to register your interest and receive an information pack simply call the Appeals Office on 01787 221828 or email info@essexairambulance.org.uk

GREAT NORTH: Last month the air ambulance service issued an urgent plea for a building to keep its Cumbria based helicopter in during the predicted big winter freeze. The Great North Air Ambulance charity does not have a hangar to store its recently returned to service BO105 'Pride of Cumbria' in at its base in Penrith.

The charity is awaiting planning permission for a hangar on the edge of the town and has appealed to local landowners to find stand-in shelter.

With the new site at Gillwilly not yet built the helicopter is being parked outside at its temporary secure base and exposed to frost and damp.

An alternative [used during operations last year] would be hiring overnight storage at Carlisle airport with significantly increases in the costs for the charity through airport charges and flying costs to and from the airport from Penrith.

The charity is looking for a large building such as a silage shed, ideally within five miles of its base in Penrith to keep flying costs down. This would need to feature a 15 metre-square landing area outside with level hard standing so that the helicopter could be rolled inside on its wheels into a doorway 40ft wide and 12ft high leading into a depth of 40ft to cover the whole helicopter. [Media]

NORTH WEST: Katie Caine from Thornton Cleveleys was 95 when she died in the summer of 2004. Mrs Katie Caine wanted her estate split between local charities, and the North West Air Ambulance received a surprise gift of £500,000, which sealed the aspirations of the charity to acquire a new state-of-the-art helicopter to replace its BO105 at Blackpool Airport. The new EC135T2 for the North West Air Ambulance flew into its home at Blackpool Airport last month.

With the existing helicopter in place but showing its age the air ambulance launched an appeal to raise funds for a new aircraft in 2004. The £500,000 target looked a long way off until Mrs Caine secured the future for the vital service at a stroke and allowed the charity to order its upgraded machine from their supplier Bond Air Services Limited at Staverton.

In recognition of the overwhelming donation, the new EC135 helicopter was christened with the name 'Katie' in her benefactor's honour in a ceremony conducted by the Reverend Kenneth Clapham, Vicar of Over Kellet parish in Carn-

forth. She was a widow and had no children so left it to her executor's to provide for charities using what she left. Katie was a real traveller. She went on Concorde when she was in



her 80s and had a real love of flying so to see this would make her so proud.

The new yellow helicopter will provide a faster and more efficient emergency service for Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Merseyside and Cumbria - a vital service seven days a week, 365 days a year across 5,500 square miles serving a residential population of seven million. Costing over £1M a year to maintain, the NWAA covers all major road incidents, all serious sporting accidents and incidents in areas that have poor and restricted road access. On average the NWAA is called out four times a day, rising up to ten in the summer. [Media/NWAA]

FIRE-FIRE-FIRE-FIRE

SPAIN

On November 24 a new contract was signed at the International Conference of Kamov's Helicopters Operators between Kamov-Holding and Helisureste companies for supply of two more Ka-32 helicopters next year. With this contract in mind, in 2006 Kamov-Holding will supply totally four Ka-32 helicopters to Helisureste. Helisureste Company is the major helicopters operator in Spain that has a wide practical experience in carrying out complex fire-fighting operations with the use of air vehicles. This Spanish operator has Ka-32 helicopters on its inventory list since 1995 and continues to replenish the air fleet with these vehicles. Four Ka-32 helicopters were delivered to the Spanish company in 2004-2005 and they are regularly used for fire fighting across Europe.

UNITED KINGDOM

WALES: An unidentified type of helicopter was used to control a blaze in a barn in Mid Wales on Boxing Day [December 26].

Fire crews were called to Glan Hafren Farm near Welshpool airport at 6.30am and efforts to control the fire were hampered by fears that the brick and timber buildings could collapse. A high-volume pump along with another four appliances and an off-road vehicle were used on the ground while the aerial appliance tackled the flames from above.

No-one was injured. The farmhouse escaped damage. [BBC/Western Mail]

SEARCH AND RESCUE

AUSTRALIA

A new \$172M fleet of aircraft will boost Australia's search and rescue capabilities in the future. Four Dornier 328 twin-engine turboprop aircraft will be stationed at Brisbane, Cairns, Melbourne and Perth as part of an upgrade of Australia's search and rescue services. Along with a further Dornier already commissioned for Darwin, the fleet would provide optimal coverage for SAR operations.

Dedicated to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority for search and rescue, the fleet is expected to begin operating in August this year and reach full capability by 2007.

The aircraft are to be equipped with surface search radar, FLIR and satellite communication.

Not everyone is happy at the new announcement. West Vic Helicopter Service board member John Robinson said the plan would not fix the time issues patients in the south-west faced when being airlifted to Melbourne hospitals. Mr Robinson said one of the problems was that fixed wing aircraft did not have the capacity to land in emergency situations.

The world's best practice is one hour, but more often than not it can be two to three hours time if the rescue craft are tied up in Melbourne even without the return trip.

The Government seemed to have ignored or did not recognise that the West Vic Helicopter proposal included a \$20M offer from the commercial business Woodside.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: The state's rescue helicopter service has been boosted since last month with new aircraft.

The expanded service, sponsored by Adelaide Bank in an extended deal, will now have three aircraft instead of two, including one water bomber. But four helicopters will be guaranteed during summer, with police estimating the extra aircraft will improve their rescue capability by 50 per cent.

The service performs medical and other rescues, police high-speed chases and patrols for boats, drug crops and firebombing.

Under a \$52M, seven-year contract, Australian Helicopters is providing Bell and Eurocopter Squirrel aircraft, and will be based at Adelaide Airport's new helicopter precinct.

BELGIUM

NH Industries has announced that Belgium has become the 14th Country to select the NH90 multirole helicopter by entering into the International Programme Organisation NAHEMO. It is the intention of Belgium to acquire ten NH90s to provide Belgian Armed Forces with comprehensive SAR, maritime and transport capabilities.

The NH90 back-log totals today 357 firm orders, 120 options and now more than 73 announced selections by 18 Armed Forces of 14 Countries overseas.



NIGERIA

The Nigeria Maritime Authority (NMA) recently hosted an International Maritime Organisation conference which primarily focused on maritime pollution at Port-Harcourt, the Rivers State.

In reviewing the role the Nigeria Maritime Authority played during the Bellview Boeing 737 plane crash at Lisa in Ogun State in October it was stated that it was a helicopter hired by the NMA that discovered the site of the crash the following day. As a result of NMA's it has been decided that the authority should purchase a helicopter that can undertake SAR operations at night.

NMA is principally involved in maritime administration. The duties of maritime administrations normally include that of maritime safety. [Vanguard]

JAPAN

Eurocopter won an open competition in Japan, to equip the Japanese coast guard with two EC 225 helicopters, the latest member of the Super Puma family.

The two ordered helicopters are planned to be used primarily for transporting coast guard

teams and for SAR missions.

For the second time in 2005, the EC 225 has been selected by Japanese authorities. At the beginning of this year, the Japanese army bought an EC 225 in VIP configuration for the transport of the Japanese emperor and official guests. [ECF]

UNITED KINGDOM

MCA: Sikorsky Aircraft has now signed a contract to provide four S-92 helicopters to CHC Helicopter Corporation to perform commercial search-and-rescue (SAR) missions for the United Kingdom Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) beginning July 1, 2007.

Under the five-year contract with the MCA, CHC will operate its S-92 fleet around-the-clock from coastal bases in Sumburgh, and Stornoway. CHC's S-92s will be equipped with duals hoists, autopilot, coupled hover capability, and the new Rotor Ice Protection System (RIPS), which meets the FAA's latest and most stringent all-weather flight safety standards. RIPS allows the S-92 to launch into known icing conditions that might otherwise delay or cancel flight operations. The RIPS determines the temperature and moisture content of the surrounding environment and applies heat to the main and tail rotor blades to remove any ice build-up. [Sikorsky]

INDUSTRY BRIEFS

EADS Socata has announced the newest variant of its TBM family - the six-seat TBM 850 pressurized single-engine turboprop. The TBM 850 builds on the success of the TBM 700 business aircraft and offers owners and pilots a maximum cruise speed of 320 KTAS at FL260 in ISA conditions. This will give TBM 850 operators the advantage of the cruising speeds typical of light jets, with the economical direct operating costs of a single-engine turboprop.

The TBM 850 is already certified by EASA, with FAA certification expected soon. Deliveries will begin early in 2006. The new aircraft will be available via EADS Socata's existing direct sales and distribution network, and will be supported by its extensive worldwide network of service centres.

Base price of the TBM 850 is set at \$2,576,930 in 2006. A version with typical customer options and equipped for RVSM (Reduced Vertical Separation Minimum) operation will list at \$2,799,850.

The powerplant of the TBM 850 is Pratt & Whitney Canada's PT6A-66D, the latest addition to the world's most popular family of turboprop engines (with over 33,000 engines produced to date). The PT6A-66D delivers 1,825 eshp flat-rated to 850 shp for the TBM 850. Its single-crystal compressor turbine blades enable higher operating temperatures and, coupled with a new first-stage compressor design, gives the TBM 850 its enhanced high-altitude performance.

Bombardier Aerospace has inaugurated its high-volume 4,650-square-meter (50,000-square-foot) aircraft parts distribution facility in Frankfurt, offering operators of Bombardier business jets and regional airliners improved local parts availability, delivery and service quality.

Strategically located near Frankfurt International Airport – which offers the greatest number of direct flights throughout Europe – the newly built facility is capable of storing approximately 40,000 unique parts. The bonded warehouse, which began shipping service parts in August 2005, serves as a central distribution centre with direct shipments around the clock to customers in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

Frankfurt is the second new facility opened within the last three weeks designed to provide customers with improved levels of parts support in their region. ExecuJet Aviation Group and Bombardier Aerospace publicly inaugurated a service facility and spare parts depot in Dubai, UAE, in November.

EADS Eurocopter has signed a cooperation agreement covering the development of a new 16-seat EC175 helicopter, following a year of intense negotiations to detail and develop the general principles laid down in the Agreement signed in October 2004 during President Chirac's official visit to China. The five-year development phase will be kicked off early in 2006. The new 'civil' helicopter is due to make its first flight in 2009, with European and Chinese certification set for 2011, the year in which production is due to start.

Eurocopter and AVIC II will each invest EUR 300 million to develop the new EC175 helicopter. Production will be shared on a 50/50 basis, and each country will have its own assembly line. Sales forecasts for this latest-generation helicopter call for 800 to be sold worldwide over the next 20 years.

The EC175 project follows in the footsteps of the past projects which spawned increasingly tight cooperative ties between Chinese industry and Eurocopter. The licensed production of the Dauphin in 1980 (Z-9 in China) and EC120 in 1992 has paved the way to this more ambitious co-development program. With more than 500 EC120s sold throughout the world an assembly line was inaugurated in Harbin, China, in 2004 to satisfy the domestic market.

Still in China it has been reported that in November work was taking place to create suitable conditions for the certification in China of the Russian **Be-103** light amphibian aircraft. The Be-103 amphibian airplane already holds certification by the FAA and Brazil.

Indonesia has plans to purchase 8 to 15 Be-103 amphibian aircraft after the Sukhoi company arranged a presentation of the amphibian to the Indonesian Minister of Fishery and Sea Transport. The type is seen as a special-purpose aircraft rather than a passenger type.

Macroswiss has unveiled a new recording guncam. Already available on the market, this weapon mounted camera records video in firefights, grants accountability, helps training and avoids risky body exposure of the user.

One of the main problems in the use of firearms, in firefight incidents, is not knowing how they were used and how the missions were executed, which generates a problem in terms of accountability of actions. That is why it is fundamental for officers in command to easily retrieve as much accurate information as is available in order to analyze the events.

Macroswiss' Guncam solves this problem, through a weapon mounted system for recording



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and reconstructing the scene and answering the five key questions when facing charges or inquiries: Where, When, Who, What and Why. The Guncam Recording Unit has been developed for use by Police Forces and Armies and it can be connected to the weapon itself or be carried on the belt or a pouch on the vest (in which case the camera is connected to the recorder through a spiral cable). The system is also equipped with key on/off switches, trigger switches that record video only upon release of the safety catch, in user-switchable recording trim (the user decides when to record) or in continuous recording trim. The high-definition images can be viewed as a video or exported as single frames.



Optional features are the GPS tracking system which is very useful for training purposes - since the whole team route and each team member's video can be viewed on a PC based software easily reconstructing the entire mission- and also the corner-shooting HUD (micro screen mounted in a pair of glasses) display which gives the user the option of seeing and shooting around corners, over or under obstacles without the need to expose themselves unnecessarily. The big advantage over similar competing products is that the Guncam uses the standard weapons in service and no specific training is therefore necessary.

The Guncam batteries offer 14 hours standby time and up to 8 hours recording enabling its use even in long missions. Details at <http://www.macrowiss.com>

Following a stringent assessment audit by BSI Management Systems, **HeliMedia**, specialists in tactical surveillance and communications solutions, has been awarded registration to the internationally recognised AS/EN9110 standard. This standard defines the quality system requirements based on ISO9001:2000 with additional criteria for the maintenance, repair and overhaul facilities for the aircraft industry.

HeliMedia was awarded registration with no non-conformances. It is one of only 24 companies worldwide* to be registered against the standard.

Dr David Scrimshire, managing director of TEC Transnational who helped HeliMedia develop the system comments: 'HeliMedia was in a unique position. It wanted to demonstrate to customers and suppliers its stringent aerospace quality processes but as it was not an aircraft integrator or aircraft maintenance company, it was not eligible to apply for regulatory EASA 145 approval.'

HeliMedia is now able to prove that it is a quality organisation with technically competent personnel and stringent quality systems that can deliver consistently what its aerospace customers demand.

The investment in HeliMedia's quality system has been worth it and the benefits are clear. AS/EN 9110 is an internationally recognised standard, which is stringently awarded and enforced in the UK by UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) so customers have a solid assurance that any company awarded with such a standard has to fulfil its criteria. It is also a 3rd party registered standard, and as such, is recognised by all MoD departments as well as NATO and operators of state aircraft such as police and coastguard. www.helimedia.co.uk

The US legislature has passed a new measure **HR 1400** Securing Aircraft Cockpits Against Lasers Act of 2005 that creates federal penalties, including up to a five-year prison term, for anyone who is convicted of knowingly pointing a laser at an aircraft in flight.

Lockheed Martin will build a prototype High Altitude Airship (HAATM) under a \$149.2M contract awarded by the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). This contract marks the beginning of

the program's third phase, leading to prototype delivery and flight in 2009. Operating at 60,000 feet, the prototype will demonstrate launch and recovery, station-keeping and flight-control capabilities while carrying mission re-configurable payloads. It will be about 400 feet long and 140 feet in diameter, and will have a volume of 3.7M cubic feet. It will be built in Lockheed Martin's facility in Akron.

Within two years of its introduction to boost border surveillance, the Indian Armed Forces have lost four **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles** (UAV), with Indian officials taking up the matter with the vehicles' Israeli manufacturers, also the choice of Turkey for the same platform.

The Indian Defence Ministry took up the matter with Israeli Aircraft Industries (IAI) after in-house probes into the crashes attributed them to system failure.

IAI, deeply shattered by the biggest corruption scandal in its history, has agreed to repair the UAV's free of cost. IAI's chief executive officer since 1985, Moshe Keret, was dismissed from office after police banned him last month from entering IAI headquarters and production facilities.

Two Indian Air Force and two Indian Army UAV's have crashed, killing one Air Force handler. The first crash of the UAV happened soon after its introduction in 2003 on a forward airbase in Rajasthan. India entered into a major agreement with Israel for supply of High Altitude Searcher and Medium Altitude Heron UAV's in 2002.

In April a team of IAI and Elbit won a long-delayed \$183M Turkish contract for supply of three UAV systems to the Turkish military, beating their US rival, General Atomics.

The Turkish contract involves the procurement of three systems -- 10 aircraft, surveillance equipment and ground control stations. Turkey's local industry will provide sub-systems and services amounting to 30 percent of the contract. Under the contract, the Israeli team plans to finish their part of the project in 24 to 30 months.

A procurement official familiar with the program said the crashes in India were being closely monitored in Ankara. (Turkish Daily News)



The REAPS (Rotorcraft External Airbag Protection System) developed by **RAFAEL Armament Development Authority Ltd.** successfully performed in a series of tests in November as part of Phase II of the Concept and Technology Demonstration program contracted by the US Navy.

The REAPS, is a one-of-a kind external airbag system, attached under the fuselage of passenger rotorcraft, designed to moderate the crash impact loadings with a surface (hard/soft ground or water). Using a proximity sensor to measure the physical parameters of ground

approach, the system is able to deploy its airbags prior to an imminent crash, thereby limiting passenger injuries and airframe damage.



The REAPS testing took place near Phoenix, AZ on Bell 206 rotorcraft. Two drops were conducted at a maximum gross weight of 3300 lbs, at impact velocities of 27 and 34 ft/sec (1,600 and 2,000 ft/min). The rotorcraft were equipped with four ATD's (Anthropomorphic Test Dummies) seated directly in the airframe without additional crash resistant seating, two 50% (medium size) males, one 95% (large size) male and one 5% (small size) female. The 'passengers' were intact after each drop, and the airframe experienced limited damage, proving outstanding crash worthiness in helicopters that

are known for their lack of it. In addition the tests proved that due to the REAPS airbags, the passengers were subjected to an impact of less than 25G with absolutely no rebound and secondary impact. Both airframes were in a repairable state following impact. [Rafael]



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The 'trade gap' in helicopter industry sales from US manufacturers reversed in 2005, moving slightly into surplus for the first time in several years, figures released here today by the **US Aerospace Industries Association (AIA)** showed.

Although the association typically does not detail sales by type or manufacturers, it said total rotary wing sector exports reached a value of \$490M in the years with imports valued at \$450M. [AIA]

AgustaWestland has started work on an expansion of its US subsidiary manufacturing facility, Agusta aerospace corporation (AAC), in Philadelphia, PA. The new, state-of-the-art facility will be used for the production of the AB139 helicopter.

The groundbreaking was commemorated by a ceremony at the site of the new facility with a number of distinguished guests and elected officials, including Congressman Curt Weldon (R-PA.), Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA.), and Italian Ambassador to the United States Giovanni Castellaneta. The new facility will be constructed beginning early next year and completed by the end of 2006.

The 110,000 square foot facility will include flight hangars, completion and final assembly areas, manufacturing stations and avionics assembly along with warehouse and office space. The project will require over \$27M investment and create 150 jobs, thereby nearly doubling AAC's existing workforce.

Agusta has been operating in Philadelphia for more than 20 years, located in its current facility since 1988. AAC will add the production of the AB139 to its responsibility of sales, assembly, customisation and support of the A109 and A119 Koala product line throughout the Americas. Additionally, AAC serves as the consolidation point for more than \$100M worth of annual exports to Italy in support of AgustaWestland product lines. [AW]

Thames Valley Police has signed a £10M, five-year managed contract to upgrade voice and data network and cut costs.

The police force says the deal with managed service provider Affiniti will save more than £1m a year, which it will re-invest in its communications infrastructure.

'Previously, we had a six-and-a-half-year contract with BT. When that ended we decided we needed to improve the efficiency of the network, and reduce costs,' says Simon Chandler, the force's communications and infrastructure manager.

'We wanted to take advantage of the changes in the managed service market in general, both from a management and technology point of view.'

Under the **Affiniti** deal, Thames Valley will use voice over IP (VoIP), converged networks, integrated CCTV and patched feeds from helicopter-mounted cameras.

The integration of 14 CCTV centres around the Thames Valley operating area is particularly significant, allowing officers to send live feeds to police control centres anywhere in the force's operational area, says Chandler.

'We will now be able to manage an incident much more efficiently than we would on the old traditional method, where we would have had a telephone link and some control over the CCTV feeds,' he said.

'The video is now integrated into the network, so CCTV can track offenders as they leave an incident, direct police officers and vehicles to the person and get snapshot pictures of them.'

Aviation parts manufacturer **EXTEX** is expanding its global reach and positioning itself for future growth through a new alliance with Helitech, one of the largest aerospace product support companies in the Australian region.

Helitech will distribute EXTEX parts to its helicopter- and fixed-wing customers in Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand, and parts of Asia.

EXTEX is a global specialist in the design and manufacture of new-technology, flight-critical FAA-approved replacement parts for turbine engines and auxiliary power units. It is also the world's largest source of FAA-approved replacement parts for Rolls-Royce 250 series helicopter engines.

Helitech, a Division of Sikorsky Aircraft Australia Limited, is a market leader in product support, component and spare parts distribution, and MRO for rotorcraft and fixed-wing aircraft in the Australasian region.

The **Civil Air Patrol** (CAP) the official auxiliary of the US Air Force depends on **IMlogic IM Manager** to secure emergency real-time communications with its 56,000 nationwide volunteers across the country for search and rescue flights, Department of Homeland Security missions and disaster response. CAP coordinated its vital missions in the South following the devastation wrought by hurricanes Katrina and Rita using instant messaging to plan hundreds of missions to find survivors, take aerial photographs and help bring aid to those in need.



CAP is using IMlogic IM Manager to manage its America Online AOL® Instant Messenger (AIM®) network.

CAP performs 95% of continental US inland SAR missions as tasked by the

Air Force Rescue Coordination Center at Langley Air Force Base, Va. CAP was credited in 2004 by the AFRCC with saving more than 140 lives. CAP volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counter-drug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. CAP has been performing missions for America for more than 63 years.

www.cap.gov

Aerospace Filtration Systems, Inc. (AFS) has received a Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) from the Federal Aviation Administration for an Inlet Barrier Filter (IBF) system for Bell 206B helicopters.

In addition to filtering out more than 99 percent of dirt and sand, AFS filter systems actually enhance engine performance when compared to inlet particle separators, delivering more engine temperature margin (thus more load carrying capacity), and a greater margin of safety. Other benefits include reduced operating and overhaul costs and reduced engine operating temperatures for increased engine life.

The system may also be used by OH-58A and OH-58C operators and will be well received by those flying airborne law enforcement missions. [AFS]

Dart Helicopter Services has announced that on December 05, 2005, its affiliated company Apical Industries received EASA approval for its Emergency Float Kits for all Eurocopter AS350/AS355 models. Apical products are exclusively distributed by Dart Helicopter Services LLC.

The systems are compatible with ground handling wheels and the float bags can be removed in a matter of minutes. The cylinder valve assemblies, floats and life rafts are available as exchange items, thereby reducing maintenance and down time. The float bags are on-condition and do not have to be returned to the factory for recertification. An integrated life raft system and retrofit kit are expected to be available 2nd quarter 2006.

ACCIDENTS

1 November 2005 MD900 Explorer G-PASH. Air ambulance of Yorkshire Air Ambulance. At Leeds/Bradford base commander [pilot] lost his footing and fell backwards from cabin doorsill on right side of aircraft whilst inspecting security of panel and broke bone in wrist, hospitalised overnight. [CAA]

18 November 2005 Cessna 182R N9928H. Civil Air Patrol. The aircraft, piloted by a commercial pilot, was destroyed when it struck a steel cable and impacted the Snake River approximately 6 miles north of Alpine, Wyoming. The pilot was fatally injured. The flight originated at Jackson (JAC), Wyoming and is believed to have been en-route to Afton (AFO), Wyoming. A Wyoming state trooper had made a traffic stop on US 26, at Mile Post 125. While he wrote the ticket, the violator saw the airplane fly past her position in the Grand Canyon of the Snake River. She told the trooper what she had seen and said that the airplane was below the highway and below the treetops. Shortly thereafter, the trooper located the inverted airplane submerged in the river. [NTSB DEN06GA017]

1 December 2005 Bell 206LT EC-HCT. Mostoles Regional Police [Madrid]/Helisureste. The helicopter crashed whilst taking off from a bullring in Mostoles injuring a Spanish opposition leader Mariano Rajoy slightly injured. The aircraft, which was also carrying two other politicians and a cameraman, took off but fell back 3 or 4 metres to the ground and rolled over on its side after clearing a wall. Police and aides pulled Rajoy and the others out of the damaged helicopter, and all five aboard, including the pilot, were able to walk away.

Ed: This machine c/n 52062 is better known as G-OCOP, the only UK operated Bell 206 twin operated by a number of UK police forces 1994-96, prior to sale to Helisureste in Spain in 1998. The helicopter entered service with Mostoles on January 26, 2005, and was the first in Spain devoted to crime prevention by local police forces.

7 December 2005 Eurocopter BO105 C-???? Canadian Coast Guard. The routine maintenance flight crashed into the Atlantic Ocean off the Newfoundland coast. Pilot Gordon Simmons, 65, and technician Carl Neal, 46, died when the MBB 105 helicopter went down. [media]

7 December 2005 Beech King Air F90 N242LF. Air ambulance of Life Flight [Metro Aviation] based Missoula, Montana. Operating with a pilot, flight nurse, flight paramedic and pa-

tient on board. Landing gear would not come down as aircraft was preparing to land at Missoula airport. The pilot was able to use the manual system to lower the landing gear and landed without incident. No injuries to crew or patient. A problem with an electrical relay was discovered and the relay was replaced. The plane was back in service 10 hours later. [Concern]

13 December 2005 Bell 206 N792CA. Air ambulance. Struck a fence as it was coming in for a landing at Scott & White Hospital, Temple, Texas. A hospital spokesperson said the helicopter from an out-of-town service clipped a barrier fence surrounding the hospital's helipad as it tried to land. A rotor was damaged. The pilot on board was not hurt. No patients or medical crew were on the helicopter. [FAA]

13 December 2005 Eurocopter BK117B2 D-HIMU. Air ambulance of DRF – Deutsche Rettungsflugwacht [German Air Rescue], Crashed in the area of Regensburg while landing at accident scene when part of the roof from a nearby building was sucked into the main rotor causing substantial damage. [via MM]

23 December 2005 Helicopter. Peruvian Security Forces. Suspected Shining Path guerrillas opened fire Friday on the helicopter, wounding two special operations police during a counter-insurgency operation in Peru's southern jungle. The wounded policemen were treated at a local hospital in the town Mazamari, 290 kilometres east of the capital Lima, near where the incident took place, a ministry statement said, without elaborating on their condition. [CJAD]

25 December 2005 McDonnell Douglas MD369FF N530MD. An Inter Island helicopter flying a fire fighting mission at Lihue, Hawaii, was picking up water from a reservoir when it crashed into the water causing serious injuries to the pilot and destroying the helicopter. [FAA]

FLIGHT SAFETY

In the USA this year, 13 air ambulances have crashed. Six crashes were fatal, killing 11 people, including a patient who was being airlifted to the hospital after a car wreck in Arkansas.

PEOPLE

There are a number of vacancies at **Specialist Aviation Services** Group but the biggest news is that Managing Director **Jeremy Awenat** Managing Director, will be leaving. His resignation will be effective from 1st February 2006. Jeremy leaves the business in a strong position and the Board is thankful for all his hard work in the development of the Company.

Henk Schaeken, former CEO of MD Helicopters Inc, will become interim Managing Director until a permanent appointment is made.

The Group has also announced that **Jim Webster**, Finance Manager, has been promoted to Deputy Managing Director and Financial Director with immediate effect. Jim joined SAS in 2000 and has been a key member of the senior management team since 2002. [Joep van den Nieuwenhuyzen – Chairman]



Sloane Helicopters are delighted to announce that Jeremy Awenat is to return as their new Managing Director from early February 2006. He replaces David Morley.

Jeremy was initially recruited into Sloane as their Commercial Manager in 1999 leaving in 2001 to become Managing Director of the Specialist Aviation Services Group of Companies, operating out of Gloucester Staverton.

Jeremy's historically strong relationship with AgustaWestland and the Robinson Helicopter Company will be of great benefit to Sloane as they substantially expand their core business of sales. He will also play a key role in Sloane's new facility in Ireland (Sloane GA), which

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will open its doors for business at about the time that he arrives.

The SAS Group are also seeking the right person to fill two other management positions, one is the Head of Department, a post potentially suited to someone with previous experience, an experienced Rotary Training Captain to undertake the role of Company Training Manager. In addition they are seeking Instrument Rated Flight Simulator Instructors. [Flight]

The Sacramento County Sheriff's deputy who narrowly escaped death in the crash of a department helicopter has returned to his West Sacramento home after six months in the hospital.

Deputy Eric Henrikson, 28, can now walk for short periods and is slowly regaining his strength following the accident last summer. Henrikson was in the rear passenger seat of the EC-120 American Eurocopter July 13 when an engine assembly problem forced the craft down near Lake Natoma. Fellow deputies Joseph Kievernagel, 36, and Kevin Blount, 29, were killed in the accident.

Henrikson suffered head trauma and broken bones in the crash and remained in a coma for more than a month. Henrikson hopes to make a full recovery in the next few months. While he plans to one day rejoin the force, Henrikson said he is not interested in continuing his training to join the department's helicopter unit. [News 10]

EVENTS The Aeroexpo 2006 web site providing information on the forthcoming International Expedition for General Aviation at Wycombe Air Park on June 23-25 is now live at www.expo.aero

NEXT MONTH Police Aviation News will carry pre-event news for the forthcoming HAI Heli-Expo in Dallas, Texas. Any companies with exhibition details should contact the Editor as soon as possible.

Due to the dates of Heli-Expo falling to the end of February the publishing date of the main edition of Police Aviation News will be altered from March 1 to accommodate the absence of the Editor at the show.

DIARY

30-31 January 2006 Rotor Tech 2006. The Helicopter Association of Australia is running this event at the Sydney Convention Centre, Darling Harbour, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Contact details robsrich@bigpond.com www.haa.net.au

7-8 February 2006 Heli-Middle East Defence focus. Grand Hyatt Hotel, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. Helicopter procurement – balancing the force. www.shephard.co.uk/heli-ME

19-23 February 2006 Firehouse World Expo. San Diego Convention Center - San

Diego, CA The largest fire and emergency services event on the West Coast. A 5 day event including education to train and educate fire, rescue and EMS professionals. The Firehouse World's show floor hosts hundreds of companies for 3 days of exhibiting. Firehouse World hosts over 6,000 Fire, Rescue, & EMS professionals in attendance each year. <http://www.firehouseworld.com/>



21-26 February 2006 Asian Aerospace 2006. Chinghi Exhibition Centre, Singapore. Reed Exhibitions. www.asianaerospace.com

23 February 2006 Helimetrics Ltd Public Service helicopter acquisition and support workshop at the Begbroke Science Park, Oxford. Topics to be covered to include the Operational requirement, Aircraft specification, The manufacturers, their agents and distributors Role equipment support issues, The Home Office Framework contract in action, Warranties Risk planning Support contracts for engines, parts and labour.

The course leader has unique experience of UK police helicopter acquisition process. The course fee £480 [multiple booking discounts available] includes a buffet lunch, biscuits and coffee. enquiries@helimetrics.com



PHOTO-CALL ULM, GERMANY

The ADAC base, Christoph 22, in Ulm Southern Germany on the 19th November showing their new building in the background. The unit is based at the German Federal Armed Forces hospital on the edge of Ulm and was originally run as a German Army unit, operating a HEER UH-1B, but later the operations was transferred to ADAC on 1 April 2003.

Until November they had been operating out of a small hangar and temporary building but on the day of the visit they had just moved in to the new offices and control room, on the left of the picture hiding behind the pile of bricks, and they expected to move into the main hangar facility by the end of November. The new building has a powered landing platform, again can be seen on the left, and an all glass frontage which, as you would expect, is environmentally friendly and reflects the heat back into the building.

Alan Norris www.norrpress.co.uk





After lengthy negotiations—the idea was mooted years ago - BN-2 Islander and Defender manufacturers BN Group are to build Cirrus light aircraft for the UK market.

POLAIR 2006

Hosted by the Metropolitan Police will be held at Rochester Airport on

16, 17 and 18 June 2006



26-28 February Heli-Expo 2006. Dallas, Texas. The world's largest trade show dedicated to the civil helicopter industry. Over the past five years, the Annual Convention and Exposition, sponsored by HAI, has hosted an average of more than 13,000 aviation professionals. Each year there is more than 175,000 net square feet of exhibits, including helicopters, from over 470 companies. In addition, there were forums, symposia, workshops, and social gatherings for industry professionals to meet and share information, professional development courses, and open meetings of HAI's 21 active committees. www.rotor.com

2006 NEW YEAR HONOURS NEW YEAR 2006

Reflecting the story about a new air ambulance in the North West funded by the death of a woman, Katie Caine [page 15], another woman took to her grave the secret that she was to be made an MBE in the latest New Year's Honours List.

Norfolk fundraiser Rita Rogers told no one she was to be honoured - and died just 20 days before it was formally announced.

Mrs Rogers, 69, raised £50,000 for charities including the East Anglian Air Ambulance, including £9000 over the past year, as she struggled against cancer.

Mrs Rogers, of Briston, near Fakenham, died on December 12, following a two-year battle against the disease. A cheque for £9,000 she had raised was presented to the East Anglian Air Ambulance from her hospital bed the day before she died.

A parish councillor who nominated her, said her inclusion in the New Year's Honours was a "wonderful surprise." He contacted the Government when he learned how ill she was to ask if the process could be speeded up so she could receive the honour as soon as possible. The pity is that it arrived just too late.

NEW YEAR BRIEFS

DIRECTFLIGHT Limited, part of the Airtask Group, specialises in the contractual provision of aircraft for global Atmospheric Research based at Cranfield, Bedfordshire are seeking a new Chief Pilot for their operation. Directflight operate a modified BAe 146 on Atmospheric Research and two Reims 406 twins on offshore aerial surveillance—Fisheries Patrol.

Piaggio are the only aircraft manufacturer still bidding to control debt-ridden Aero Vodochody in the Czech Republic. There are nine other groups interested.

Just to lighten up the gloom of a Northern Hemisphere January a quick competition has been launched by Kevin Means of the **ALEA**. 'Who has had (or has) the goofiest mission?' That sort of translates into **Old English** as 'daftest,' 'most unusual'... The rules are...

1. It must be, or have been an officially sanctioned mission, approved by the department that oversees the aviation unit.
2. One flight is sufficient to qualify as a mission (I.e. It doesn't have to be an ongoing mission).
3. You cannot nominate other agencies - it must be your agency at the time the mission was performed.
4. All entries must be submitted by January 31st 2006.
5. They have to be true! No fairy stories or dreams!

Its really an ALEA thing [the nominal prize is only available at the ALEA Convention] but I am sure if non-members have someodd mission profile they want to throw into the pot it will be readily accepted via PAN. Otherwise — members to the Unit Managers Forum at the www.alea.org discussion page.

Shephard
HELI
Pacific
31 May - 1 June 2006, Royal Pines Resort, Queensland, Australia



Enforcement Expo.

July 12-13, 2006

I-X Center

Cleveland, Ohio

www.enforcementexpo.com