

# Police Aviation News



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Number 190 February 2012



*Deliveries made to law enforcers in*

**ECUADOR**

**EQUATORIAL GUINEAU**

*orders from*

**KENYA**

**TURKEY**

*... and on the argumentative front...*

**NPAS GETS TOUGH**

**ORNGE IN TURMOIL**



**HAI HELI-EXPO**

**DALLAS TEXAS**

**PREVIEW**

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# LAW ENFORCEMENT

## BRAZIL

**PARANA:** The Federal Police in the Parana district in Brazil started operating an IAI Heron 1 uav airframe late last year.

The Heron, a large unmanned system, will perform missions in the San Miguel de Iguacu area as part of the overall effort to fight drug trafficking. It is predicted that by 2014 four bases in Brazil will be equipped to operate the type. The Heron was first demonstrated in Brazil in 2009. The police say that the Heron system can successfully complete missions under difficult climate and terrain conditions, and has more advanced flight and loitering capabilities than those offered by other similar craft.

The State of Parana has operated a number of fixed and rotary wing craft over the past 30 years including examples of the Bell JetRanger and the Beech King Air. The most recent deliveries have been a pair of EC130 helicopters in 2010.

## CHINA

Everything in China police aviation is not as clear cut as it would seem. Various manufacturers have made claims about what is in country and what is not but there are so many grey areas it is difficult to put a finite picture on actual police aviation activity.

One of the EC135P2 helicopters delivered to the Shenyang Police in April 2006 has turned up in the UK to become G-CGZD with Bond Air Services.

Enquiries about the trail that led this aircraft to now be in the UK led to it being learned that although there are three EC135s in the country there is only one EC135P2 and it is not the one originally delivered to the police. The helicopter belongs to COHC and Shenyang Police leased it for a while but then returned to Shenzhen.

At the present time, the helicopter is operated by CGAC (the General Aviation Branch of COHC) and has been leased to Chongqing Police for the past 2 years but it is mainly for use in fire fighting survey and VIP transport.

At the present time Eurocopter have three police dedicated EC135T2 helicopters in country, one with Guangdong Public Security Bureau and two in Shanghai. For the record the EC135P2 now in the UK was previously in China as G-214007 in 2006. [PAR/ECC]



**FRONT COVER:** Eurocopter EC135T2+ HB-ZEN of Rescue Geneva operates from Hélicoptère des hôpitaux universitaires de Genève and works in cooperation with REGA Swiss Rescue. Serial number 0257 was built in 2002 and delivered as D-HECH. ©REGA

## ECUADOR

**POLICE SERVICE:** Last month Eurocopter de México S.A. (EMSA), delivered a single-engine AS350B2 helicopter to the Quito Aerial Police Service, of the Ecuadorian National Police Force, for use on public security missions. The new aircraft was presented during a ceremony at the customer's facilities in Quito which was attended by senior officials from Ecuador's Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Police Force and the National Council for the Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (CONSEP), along with EMSA representatives.



Eurocopter

The Aerial Police Service now has two AS350 B2s following this latest delivery under the contract signed by EMSA with the General Headquarters of the Ecuadorian National Police Force in December 2009.

The Aerial Police Service of the Ecuadorian National Police Force has been carrying out missions to safeguard public security in Ecuador for 14 years now, operating from five strategically located bases. Other resources include a Robinson R44 and four MD530F helicopters. [EC/PAR]

## EQUATORIAL GUINEAU

The former Suffolk Police EC135T1 G-SUFF c/n 0118 as been sold and exported to Africa for police use. This airframe is one of a number of former police EC135T1 airframes held by Eurocopter UK since being taken in part exchange for new airframes – PAN carried adverts for them a year ago.

The sale of c/n 0118 is to a civil operator who will operate it on behalf of government in the LE role in support of the 28<sup>th</sup> African Nations Cup being held in Gabon and Equatorial Guinea from 21 January. The event commenced with two matches in Bata, Equatorial Guinea.

*Ed: The aircraft was reportedly delivered minus the sensor turret because of export control reasons so it is unknown what sensor was used. The aircraft was delivered with an analogue downlink capability and an ECS receiver suitcase. Shortly after the airframe arrived in country the operators were seeking additional ground receivers so it seems clear that a camera without the difficulties associated with US export controls was to be employed.*

*The helicopter was flown out to Africa on an Antonov An124 from Stansted Airport on January 6 so the work up time for the operator was limited.*

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## GERMANY

**FEDERAL:** Eurocopter announced the German Federal Police has reached a total of 100,000 flight hours mark with its EC135 fleet, which performs thousands of operations annually across Germany for law enforcement, home security and Helicopter Emergency Medical Services missions.

With a current fleet of 41 EC135s, the German Federal Police is one of the largest parapublic operators of this aircraft in the world.

“We appreciate the flexibility and the mission portfolio of the EC135 combined with its outstanding reliability,” said Thomas Helbig, head of the German Federal Police Air Support Service. “The specific mission that achieved the 100,000th flight hour perfectly showcases the capabilities of the EC135: Carried out at nighttime with NVGs and a FLIR during a railway surveillance mission, the crew was able to detect the suspects in the very act and coordinate the pursuit, resulting in the successful arrest of the offenders.”

The German Federal Aviation Group operates an all-Eurocopter fleet of more than 80 aircraft, which consists of the EC120 for training, the EC135 T2i for air ambulance and law enforcement missions, the EC155 B for light transportation and multi-role tasks and the AS332 L1 Super Puma for long distance and VIP transportation, surveillance, maritime missions and disaster relief in Germany and abroad.

## INDIA

**CENTRAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION:** In intensifying efforts to trace the body of missing Rajasthan nurse Bhanwari Devi, the CBI has zeroed in on places in Jaloda village where she could have been buried and are scouting the area using sophisticated devices.

Four months after the disappearance of the nurse they flew an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) over the area where her body is suspected to have been disposed of, scouring the terrain for any visible sign of her remains. They have a named suspect but it seems that he

is not offering up an admission that might assist the investigators.

Media speculation suggests that there is a hope that a map of the terrain generated by the UAV's high-definition cameras will help narrow down the search field to pockets of high probability which can then be examined closely.

The UAV has been supplied by a Mumbai-based private firm. This is the first time that CBI has employed such a technique in an investigation of a disappearance and possible murder. [Media]

## KENYA

**POLICE AIR WING:** The Kenya Police Air-Wing is expanding its airborne law enforcement and crime prevention unit with the delivery of a Eurocopter AS350B3e Ecureuil helicopter.

Kenya's selection of the AS350 B3e, which is the enhanced version of Eurocopter's successful AS350 model, follows an open and competitive tender won earlier this year by Eurocopter Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd, the Group subsidiary in charge of Southern Africa markets. The new helicopter, which was handed over to the Kenya Police, in Nairobi will be dedicated to police law enforcement and crime prevention missions including anti-poaching, anti-terrorism operations. It will also be deployed in search & rescue, casualty evacuation, personnel transport and various other civic protection roles. [EC]

## NORWAY

**OSLO:** There are reports that the police won't be getting the second helicopter, promised and funded after last July's terrorist attacks, for several more months because of delays tied to mandatory bidding processes. The country currently operates an EC135T2, and might be expected to get the same type again. [Helihub]

*Editor: Sundt Air Norway took delivery of the first EC135T2 in February 2004 from McAlpine Helicopters in the UK. The Norwegian aircraft was the first to have the Wescam MX15 and the Spectrolab Nightsun 2 fitted to the McAlpine designed role equipment pod. The helicopter was operated on behalf of the Norwegian Police by Sundt Air/Pegasus Helicopters on a five-year contract operating out of a base at Gardemoen International Airport, 50 kilometres north of Oslo.*

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# TURKEY

**POLIS:** Bell Helicopter has announced that it has been selected by the Turkish National Police from a field of several companies to enter final negotiations for an award for 15 Bell 429s with an option for five additional aircraft.

Shortly after this announcement Bell announced the receipt of Transport Canada approval for a 500 lbs. weight increase to the Bell 429 – increasing the maximum gross weight to 7,500 lbs [3,400kg].

For some time there have been calls from customers and potential customers to overcome the high empty weight of the model and this is an answer to those requests.

The Bell 429 is certified for Single or Dual Pilot IFR, Cat. A / JAROPS Performance Class 1 at maximum gross weight; has a state-of-the-art, fully-integrated glass cockpit; an advanced drive system that delivers power and superb performance; best in class WAAS navigation & IFR capability; and is the first helicopter certified through the MSG-3 process. The additional gross weight now permits operators to equip the Bell 429 with additional options including Helicopter Terrain Awareness Warning System (HTAWS), a radar altimeter, cockpit voice/flight data recorder and strobe lights.



*Editor: The new weight limit blows a major hole in the ceiling of the provisions of JAR27 and places the airframe in JAR29 territory. The Bell 429 then is more an alternative to the EC145 rather than the AW109/MD902 and EC135 market sector it was launched into.*

# UGANDA

**POLICE:** Last month Flight International carried an invitation to industry bid for the supply of a new multi-role twin-turbine helicopter. No details of the weight or seating capacity of the desired type were given in the advertisement. Bids are to be delivered to the Police Force Procurement Unit in Kampala by February 6.

After operating a string of single and twin engine Bell helicopters over the last three decades in 2008 they took delivery of a single engine AW119 that crashed in March 2010 and does not appear to have been replaced.

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## UNITED KINGDOM

NPAS: It has been confirmed that Captain Oliver Dismore ['Ollie'] has been selected to be the new project leader for NPAS. No indication has been given as to how long the release period to be worked out at EC is.

*Meanwhile both local and national newspapers have been carrying a large number of stories on NPAS. Much of this has simply been a repeat of the content of the October 2010 launch of the scheme as new reporters effectively 'discovered' the story but there were new elements evident.*

The government's position relating to police authorities either stalling a decision or, as in the case of South Yorkshire, refusing to join NPAS has hardened.

In an apparently related move on January 25 the ACPO lead on NPAS, Chief Constable Alex Marshall [@hantschiefalex] tweeted "Sorted out some Nat Police Air Service (NPAS) stuff this pm. Coming together well....."

The following day the newspapers reported that the policing minister, Nick Herbert, had for the first time used powers to direct forces to collaborate with each other to create the aviation service. It was said to be in direct reaction to the South Yorkshire campaign to keep sole use of its helicopter.

The report was pre-emptive and before Herbert officially announced the move in a speech in London. The order directing South Yorkshire to take part in the national air service is to be made under new powers in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. [See South Yorkshire below].

An air of confusion arose and the joint Wiltshire police and air ambulance operation was seen to seek clarification, as their joint use operation seemed to be threatened with closure prior to the end of the current contract due to end in December 2014. [ACPO/Guardian/PA/This is Wiltshire/PAR]

BRISTOL: Avon & Somerset Police have been telling their local populace that the police helicopter is likely to stay at its current base of BAE Filton 'for years to come.' [Western Daily Press/MJ]

*Editor: This is apparently a mix of BAE public relations spin and timing. BAE and GKN the manufacturers of aircraft parts on the site have been 'damaged' by the poor public relations generated by plans to close and sell off the runways and infrastructure outside the factory doors and see a declaration of their intention to make an area available as an airborne emergency services heliport as an answer.*

*The site can be seen as secure for a handful of years anyway as it will take that long to sell off. The declaration to set aside an area as a heliport – not necessarily the same area as now housing the EC135T2 police helicopter and the Great West Air Ambulance BO105 – is not written in stone and does not change any potential actions by either NPAS or the AA. It is said that Colerne is no longer a basing option.*

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**DYFED POWYS:** A new threat has emerged to the continued short-term viability of the sole AgustaWestland A109E Power in UK police service. The Power used to cover the largest geographical force area in Britain could be grounded because of what its Chief Constable has described as a major 'funding crisis'.

Ian Arundale said Dyfed Powys Police faces cutting up to 300 jobs in what he describes as the 'most significant crisis policing has faced in the past 150 years'.

He also said the helicopter could be prematurely mothballed. Air operations started in 1991 and were scheduled to continue for another two years as NPAS is set up. The Dyfed-Powys helicopter is on call 12 hours a day, apart from bank holidays when it is available for eight hours. [Wales Online]

*Ed: This threat to cut the operation pre-empts the scheduled deletion under the forthcoming NPAS scheme. Although there is to be a fixed wing trial no decisions have yet been made.*

**NORTHERN IRELAND:** Since the army has pulled out police air resources have been stretched to the limit and, perhaps, there is a readiness for the police to accept more readily the 'unconventional' air resources when undertaking searches for missing people. Certainly that is the conclusion some are making when recently Sky Watch Civil Air Patrol [SWCAP] aircraft were drafted in to undertake bolster searches for a missing cyclist.

The SWCAP is a national voluntary organisation of private pilots and aircraft owners which provides locally-based light aircraft, helicopters, gyrocopters and microlight aircraft to assist the emergency services by offering airborne search and rescue services. It has parallels in the aims of the CAP in the USA.

Samuel Campbell (49) set out for a bicycle ride from his Kells home in County Antrim on New Year's Day but did not return. Three days later his bicycle was found in the sea near Glenarm. This sparked a major land, sea and air search in County Antrim by the Police Ser-

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vice of Northern Ireland, the Royal National Lifeboat Institute, HM Coastguard, which deployed the Irish Coastguard helicopter, Northern Ireland Police Service helicopter and aircraft from the Northern Ireland Unit of Sky Watch Civil Air Patrol.

Gales hampered the search but the weather finally improved after a week and a request was sent to the Sky Watch Lowland Unit in Scotland to conduct an aerial surveillance of the Clyde coastal area, where the Coastguard computer predicted that, in a worse-case scenario, a body might be expected to surface.

Two Fife-based aircraft - a Zenair 601 and a Sportcruiser - flew to Perth (Scone) Airport for a briefing and then flew to an airstrip on the Island of Bute, from where they conducted a series of coastal searches. The Zenair concentrated on an area around Arran, while the Sportcruiser extended the search around Campbeltown and Machrihanish. The Zenair conducted a further search in deteriorating weather conditions the following day and a Sky Watch gyrocopter flew along the South Ayrshire coast between Ayr and Girvan.

In addition to the Scots based aircraft a Foxbat aircraft of Northern Ireland Unit of SWCAP continued to search the Northern Ireland coastline and each co-ordinated with the Royal Air Force Rescue Centre at RAF Kinloss.

To date the missing person has not been found but this and other operations serve to demonstrate SWCAP as a valuable asset to the emergency services.

The Lowland Unit covers all of southern Scotland and has arrangements with a growing number of emergency service agencies, including the Royal Air Force Aeronautical Co-ordination Centre and local police forces. [SWCAP]

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE:** Apparently as part of an ongoing campaign to remain outside NPAS recent performance results for the only police helicopter liable to renege on the edicts of NPAS have been released. The SY99 Air Operations Unit operates an MD902 Explorer G-SYPA from the former Sheffield Airport site.

In 2011 the unit completed 4,832 separate tasks, made 319 arrests and assisted with the apprehension of a further 399 suspects. The team helped find 42 vulnerable missing people, located 143 vehicles and recovered £2.32M worth of property and drugs.

These figures were released prior to the government decision to direct South Yorkshire to join NPAS [see item page 7] and will be eased somewhat by the appointment of a new chief constable. The previous man in post, Meredydd Hughes, was closely associated with acquiring and promoting air support and perhaps even created the mindset that led to the decision to say no.

South Yorkshire Police Authority appointed David Crompton as the new chief constable. The 48-year-old, originally from Manchester, previously held a number of roles at West Yorkshire Police and was more recently the deputy chief constable with a leading role in proposals to save money as part of a cost reduction strategy. [SYPA/PAR/NPAS]

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ARIZONA: In November 2010 the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office received the gift of a 2005 Robinson R44 Raven helicopter from Guidance Helicopters, Inc. The donation, valued at \$180,000, is the single largest donation ever to be given to the YCSO but it came with a proviso that the recipient knew that it was 'timed out' and required a \$250,000 overhaul before use. The helicopter, N544SH c/n 10818 formerly operated by the defunct Silver State Helicopters, was refurbished using federal and local funds. During the overhaul period Guidance continued to provide a helicopter at no cost – a dozen operations were conducted, mainly on rescues.

On January 20, Guidance Aviation formally handed over the newly painted Robinson to the Sheriff's Office at Prescott Airport in front of Guidance Aviation building. Sgt. Jeff Newnum will be in charge of the unit and determine when it will fly. [Media]

Pinal County Sheriff's Office has launched its air unit. The operation has been put together since last summer and now comprises two aircraft, a 1976 Piper Super Cub which was obtained from the Border Patrol through a state surplus transfer and 1990 MD 500E helicopter recently purchased with money provided by Gov. Jan Brewer and the State Legislature to help aid in Search & Rescue missions as well as combat human and drug smuggling. The unit launched at Gold Canyon AZ Jan 26. <http://pinalcountyaz.gov>



CALIFORNIA: The Tulare County Sheriff's Department's officially launched their new light sport aircraft, called Sheriff One, at a hangar at the Visalia Municipal Airport late last year. The sheriff's department took delivery of the Flight Design CTLE-N911TS from the manufacturers agent in August, and have been working up on it since.

Most of the aircraft's purchase price was paid for with a California Emergency Management Agency grant, and the remaining came from forfeited drug assets. Between fuel, insurance, maintenance and renting hangar space, Sheriff One will cost about \$34 for every flight hour used, not counting the salaries of the deputies flying it. Tulare County is the first in the country to use this aircraft full time for air patrols.

Some of the flight crewmembers are volunteers from the sheriff's Aero Squadron, a group of private and commercial pilots who provide their skill and, sometimes, their own aircraft to help in search and rescue and flight operations. [Visalia Times]

*Editor: The aircraft is manufactured in Germany by Flight Design GmbH. In 2009 the Tulare City Council agreed to the city's Police Department entering into an agreement with Blue Sky Aviation for helicopter support shared with six other departments in the county. In March 2011 it was announced that Tulare were to change direction and use a homeland security grant to purchase the single-engine light sport aircraft.*

SACRAMENTO: In December the Yamhill County Sheriff's Office in McMinnville, Oregon decided to divest themselves of a surplus Bell OH-58A and turn it over to the Sacramento Police Department. Like a number of other small law enforcement agencies the county discovered that getting one of these aircraft for free is one thing, but keeping them maintained and certified is quite expensive. And, in these recessionary times, the Yamhill County commission determined those expenses were too much. The commission voted unanimously to officially turn over the airframe 72-21341 currently registered as "N991YC" to another agency. The recipients are a small unit operating two helicopters and a fixed wing for 2,000 hours annually. [Media]

FLORIDA: January 2012: Broward County Commissioners approved a request by the Broward Sheriff's Office to purchase a new \$6.5 million helicopter. BSO said its fleet of helicopters is now in need of backup.

Two EC135T1 helicopters were built in 1999 and the third, an EC130B4, was built in 2003. With only three aircraft in the rotation, it's rare all of them are flight ready. A fourth aircraft would allow mechanics to keep up with the complex maintenance schedule and extend the life of the fleet by spreading the total flight time between more aircraft.

Even with the new aircraft, he said BSO will still be operating a relatively small fleet. Miami-Dade County has eight helicopters; Palm Beach County has five. Both counties use separate aircraft for police and medical purposes while BSO uses the same aircraft for both.


Last year BSO helicopters flew 3,557 total missions, contributing to 498 arrests, and transported 214 seriously injured patients to local trauma centres.

The new helicopter will be ordered by the end of the month and should be in service by the end of the year.

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# AIR AMBULANCE

## CANADA

**SASKATCHEWAN:** One year after an air ambulance of Saskatchewan Air Ambulance [Lifeguard] slid off a snowy runway in Maple Creek, the Saskatchewan government has mandated that two pilots be behind the controls.

The King Air 200 air ambulance C-GSAM had just touched down to pick up a patient when it hit a snow windrow left behind by a grader and lost control; the aircraft sustained CAN\$1.5M in damage, but no one was injured.

In that specific instance the second set of eyes in cockpit is unlikely to have made a difference but the government has decided to switch to two-person crews. Saskatchewan is the last province in Canada to do so. [Media]

**ORNGE:** In the wake of last month's report of disquiet at the amount of money some executives were taking home it seems some highly-paid executives are no longer in residence.

The new president at the publicly funded agency is Ron McKerlie, a deputy minister in government services who regularly lectures on accountability.

An ongoing newspaper investigation found that top executives at ORNGE, which gets \$150M in taxpayers money a year, were involved in questionable behaviour even as the service that was created to fly sick and injured Ontario residents to hospital was failing to meet operating targets – it was late to some emergency calls and failed to provide proper coverage in certain parts of the province. Now the Ministry of Health investigators are probing them.

In apparently associated moves eighteen people are reported to be leaving Ornge, a youth charity arm being shut down and two aircraft have been declared surplus to requirements [Media]

An investigation is underway into as yet unexplained deaths involving Ontario's air ambulance service and as to whether a design problem that places patients too close to the ceiling in the helicopter cabin plays a role. It is said that the litter is too high to allow paramedics to undertake CPR on the patients. Ornge replaced its Sikorsky S-76 helicopters with the AW139 and Aerolite built the medical interiors that entered service in late 2010.

Despite apparently being satisfied with the medical interior design it is now evident that some are citing a design flaw that places the stretcher too high in the cabin to allow effective life-saving to take place. Thirteen incidents have highlighted the potential problem and two of three deaths may be linked to it. In at least one of the cases, concerns about the on-board facilities led paramedics to decide to opt to transport a patient to a nearby hospital by land.

Undertaking changes to the certified interior are not simply a matter of making alterations and Ornge are having to meet with the regulatory authorities in Canada to seek an exemption to allow the stretcher to be in a transverse position for taxi, takeoff and landing. The exemption would resolve the current issues related to clearance for performing CPR.

Subsequent reports have suggested a number of extraordinary commercial strategies have taken place in recent years, one alleged that the original tender for the now discredited interior was designed to reduce the chances of open competition by placing it in an obscure portal. [Media]



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Last month the Association of Allied Health Professionals voiced safety concerns on behalf of its 750 members who operate within the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Flight Program [MFP]. In June last year a safety assessment was undertaken by Eastern Health's Quality and Risk Management Department and it concluded that there were a number of areas of disquiet relating to the capabilities of the venerable Bell 206 helicopter in widespread EMS service in Canada. While the 206 is considered to be a safe patient transport increasingly a wider awareness of its deficiencies have led to the type falling out of favour with medical teams.



Apparently aware of some of the disquiet the Department of Health has ordered that a newly ordered Bell 407 be converted to address the shortcomings of the 206. This in turn has led to further disquiet as it appears clear that the plans put forward for the 407 cannot address one of the primary safety problems – a preference for two engines – and another area of concern is that its cabin is only a few inches larger than the Bell 206. The Bell cabin is too small for both the patient and the ever growing list of necessary equipment. The patient's feet/stretcher extends from the fuselage into the cockpit and medically necessary equipment cannot be secured and at times ends up being placed on the patient. At a time where the average patient is growing heavier there is a limit of 250 pounds in place and certain medical procedures cannot be performed while in the air because there is not enough room.

Additional technical concerns relating to the airframe include the absence of de-icing protection, single pilot operation and a poor communications suite.

On the medial side in addition to the shortcomings of the cabin size there are no AC electrical outlets to operate equipment such as IV pump, ventilator and cardiac monitor, each of which relies upon the vagaries of internal battery power only. Oxygen and medical air cannot be carried in large cylinders as there is no way to secure the cylinders.

AAHP believes that the rugged local geography calls for twin-engine operations in future.

The MFP is up for renewal in March and this is seen as a good time to address the wish for a better suited modern helicopter. [Helihub]

*Ed: The sidelining of single engine non-IFR capable airframes is just one of the inevitable consequences of alerting the Aeromedical industry to safety issues. Offering and demonstrating to the medical teams the differences between a BO105 or 206 sized cabin and the many larger options is another pressure. Both are at play here.*

## CAYMAN ISLANDS

The Cayman Islands Ministry of Health is working on getting a dedicated air ambulance service based in Grand Cayman to fly local patients off island for overseas medical care.

Efforts are under way for private health insurers, the Cayman Islands National Insurance Company and the Health Services Authority to join forces to make it viable for a single air ambulance operator to service the Cayman Islands.

Currently, each insurance company arranges for different air ambulance services to take its members off island to hospitals in the United States when necessary.

According to statistics from the Civil Aviation Authority of the Cayman Islands, last year there were 194 air ambulance trips from Cayman, 176 in 2010, 154 in 2009, and 225 in 2008 – an average of 3.6 a week for the past four years.



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## IRELAND

Even as news is awaited on the first service date of long promised charity funded air ambulance network the Minister for Health Dr James Reilly is expected to confirm that the Air Corps will operate Ireland's first dedicated Helicopter Emergency Medical Service.

Several groups have submitted proposals to operate the emergency air ambulance service, however it is known that Dr Reilly has also been considering the Air Corps and Irish Coast Guard as potential operators.

The Air Corps already carries out "air ambulance" functions where patients are transported between hospitals in Ireland and facilities overseas, while the Coast Guard is responsible for medical evacuations from island communities.

The new service, however, will respond to serious incidents within the State, including road traffic collisions and situations where a patient needs to reach a hospital faster than a road transfer will allow.

This will be the first time that such a dedicated service will be available in Ireland, which remains the only country in the European Union without a dedicated air ambulance service.

It is expected that such a service will play a vital role in responding to serious incidents on the country's motorway network, which has grown from 300km to 1,187km in just five years.



**DOCTOR HELI:** AgustaWestland and Kaigai Aviotech Corporation have delivered into service a GrandNew helicopter to serve the Dr Heli air ambulance service in Japan.

Kagoshima International Aviation took delivery of the GrandNew and it is to be used to perform emergency medical service missions in the Kagoshima Prefecture, southern Japan. A ceremony was held in Kagoshima on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2011, in presence of the Governor of Kagoshima Prefecture and the Mayor of Kagoshima City, to celebrate the entry into service of the aircraft.

This handover marks the entrance of the first EMS-configured GrandNew helicopter in the Japanese market. The GrandNew delivered features a comprehensive EMS configuration with a cabin layout able to accommodate two litters plus medical attendants. Additionally, an AW109 Power in the same EMS cabin configuration will serve as a back-up for the operation. The two aircraft JA01KG and JA02KG [the Power] are seen in the image above.

## SAUDI ARABIA

**RED CRESCENT:** The Saudi Red Crescent is reportedly again looking for a contractor for its troubled air ambulance operation. The latest moves are said to include a need for over 25 helicopters to expand the existing operation but opinion suggests that finding a contractor willing to bid for the operation will be difficult because of previous difficulties. [Pprune]

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## UNITED KINGDOM

**CHILDREN'S:** The Children's Air Ambulance [CAA] carried out its first rescue using an aircraft of the Warwickshire & Northamptonshire Air Ambulance (WNAA).

At around midday WNAA was called to assist a one month old baby who had been taken with breathing difficulties to see a GP at Stratford-upon-Avon Hospital. The baby had subsequently stopped breathing and the helicopter landed in a small grass area in the grounds of the community hospital. The mother and baby girl were flown to University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire (UCHW), treatment en route stabilised the tiny patient successfully.

The CAA will be fully operational at the end of 2012 when a third 'bespoke' helicopter will fly out of Coventry Airport. It will specialise in the transfer of sick babies and children nationwide, working closely with dedicated treatments centres and staff across the country. [WNAA]

*Editor: This operation using one of the standard helicopters of an existing air ambulance operation is exactly the defence that other air ambulances have been quietly putting forward to say that there is no need for a separate dedicated young people's helicopter along with its costly national fund raising and administrative 'tail'.*

*Every day one of the existing air ambulance charities is **available** to undertake the supposed specialist role of the CAA - and more - with barely a mention. A patient in need of treatment or transfer is after all a patient.*

*In the past year Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance helped save the lives of more than 100 children and young people. In the next county, the two helicopters of Devon Air Ambulance Trust airlifted 147 children under the age of 16 last year, Lincs & Notts under 40 – suggesting that an average air ambulance expects to have 10-15% of its total casualties under the age of 16. In Yorkshire they tend to take the medical crew to the patient – whether they are in hospital or in the street. Each approach achieves the same ends with locally available resources. If child carriage is 10% of normal operations inter-hospital trans-*

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fer of children is so rare as to be a special event and a quick survey of many of the charities seems to support that view. Most cannot recall having to undertake an inter-hospital transfer of a child. One prime reason is that most hospitals do not have helipad facilities and that means most such flights would involve ground transport at either or both ends of the journey – thereby negating many of the fast transport gains the flight might offer. Another aspect is that most inter-hospital transfer missions would be chargeable – so where now the charity funding?

Regardless of whether the mission is an inter-hospital transfer or an on-street emergency the existing CAA model would require the specialist dedicated helicopter to travel from its central base to the point of need – an element that would be wasteful of resources and more importantly time. In a ‘worst case’ scenario the Coventry based AW109 might fly to Cornwall for the patient and undertake a transfer to London and in the process pass a total of at least eight existing ambulance helicopters able to undertake the mission more effectively and in a shorter time frame. At longer ranges helicopters are in any case wholly inefficient movers and there has been no mention of a CAA fixed wing.

The CAA is primarily an inter-facility transfer operation but it is still seeking precious charity funds from across the nation and drawing upon the heart strings of a largely unquestioning public.

The whole operation appears to be an opportunity for the fundraisers of the CAA to pop up in any high street across the nation raising money for an air ambulance operation in Coventry and that will not please any of the longstanding regional air ambulance fundraisers one bit. In the past the industry has successfully moved against the CAA and other similar groups like Lucy’s to successfully bring their activities into question with the Charity Commission but the recent backing of the Air Ambulance Service – one operator that steadfastly refuses to cooperate with others in the industry - looks set to bring about unwelcome developments that will likely merge into the background to be no more than a badge on the existing Air Ambulance Service fleet when the hullabaloo dies down.

DEVON: On January 20 DAAT celebrated the success of the BBC Radio Devon Air Ambulance Appeal, which exceeded the target of £600,000 with a special day involving the BBC broadcasting live from 6am to 7.00pm. The event was held at DAAT’s Steve Ford Airbase, Eaglescott Airfield, Umberleigh. Attending throughout the day were many of the people who made the Appeal possible, including fundraisers and patients, and playing live in the hangar were the band “The South” (aka *The Beautiful South* minus vocalist Paul Heaton).

The final total of the fundraiser, aiming at raising sufficient funds for the recently ordered second EC135, was £725,000. [DAAT]



HERTFORDSHIRE: Three years into the operation the fundraising team from the Herts Air Ambulance will be relocating to Buntingford after outgrowing their current office alongside the aircraft at North Weald, Essex.

The helicopter will still be based at North Weald Airfield but the staff will be operating from Unit 24 of the Park Farm Industrial Estate in Ermine Street from February 2.

The new location will make it quicker for team members to travel across the county and easier for volunteers to have access to the office and the resources they need for their role.

LONDON: London’s Air Ambulance is intent on securing an extra £3M in annual funding to help it carry out its work and enhance services, said its new executive director Dr Julian Thompson. He is encouraging corporate London to help and secure the charity’s long-term future. Current revenue streams for the service include funding from the NHS, individual donations, a lottery scheme and some corporate sponsorship, bringing in between £2.2M



and £2.8M a year.

The single MD902 helicopter in operation provides the air component of the joint air and ground fleet used to attend 2,000 trauma victims every year. The helicopter has been demonstrating an overall 70%, daylight only, availability from its base atop the recently rebuilt Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel. [JT]

#### UNITED STATES

**CALIFORNIA:** California Shock Trauma Air Rescue (CALSTAR), a not-for-profit air ambulance company serving northern and central California has suspended operations of its helicopter base located in Jackson, Amador County (CALSTAR 10). The company will also relocate its helicopter base operations, formerly known as CALSTAR 11, from its location at McClellan Park in Sacramento County to Vacaville in Solano County, and consolidate them with existing base operations at the Nut Tree Airport, known as CALSTAR 8.

CALSTAR will continue to serve the communities in Amador and surrounding counties from its bases located in Auburn, Placer County (CALSTAR 3) and South Lake Tahoe (CALSTAR 6).

There have been a number of changes in the demand for air transportation, notably the opening of three new trauma centres which shorten the transport time from accident scenes, as well as the overall drop in the demand for trauma transports.

CALSTAR operates a fleet of 18 helicopters at bases in Ukiah, Vacaville, Concord, Gilroy, Salinas, Santa Maria, Auburn, South Lake Tahoe and two fixed wing aircraft at McClellan. In recent moves they have been offering elements of their helicopter fleet for sale.

**FLORIDA:** They have been iconic, images of them have been floated around by Sikorsky for more than a decade now but now the Palm Beach County Health Care District has begun discussions on whether and when to replace its air ambulance fleet, which is almost 13 years old. The district paid \$6.7 million each for its two Sikorsky S76-C+ trauma helicopters, delivered in 1999. Each one has transported about 4,700 patients during its life and flown

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more than 2,600 hours.

While the helicopters are low hour and have been meticulously maintained it is felt that their age is telling on them from the point of ease of maintenance and the level of equipment fitted. The NTSB is recommending some new safety equipment that the Health Care District's fleet doesn't currently have, principally HTAWS and NVG's.

In 2000, the Health Care District began setting aside \$1M a year in its reserves for the planned replacement of the aircraft after 10 years. But in 2008, as the economic downturn cut into the tax base, those reserves were used for other purposes.

**IDAHO:** Life Flight Network, a not-for-profit air medical transport service in the Pacific Northwest and Intermountain West, will open a new helicopter base in Sandpoint, Idaho on March 1, 2012.

The company plans to assign 14 or 15 employees to the Sandpoint base, including Flight Nurses, Flight Paramedics, Pilots and Mechanics. These crew members and the rotor-wing aircraft assigned to the base will be at the ready to handle air medical transport on a 24 hour/7 days per week basis.

Life Flight Network offers the largest emergency air medical service in Idaho, Washington and Oregon. Prior to opening the Sandpoint base, the company operates bases in Boise, Pocatello, Mountain Home, and Lewiston, Idaho; Ontario, Aurora, Hillsboro, La Grande and Eugene, Oregon; and Longview and Dallesport, Washington.

**MICHIGAN:** Metro Aviation, Inc. received an FAA STC for a complete Emergency Medical System kit and associated options for the Eurocopter EC155B1. This is the first EC155B1 to be equipped with an EMS package in the United States.

The STC included: Blackout Curtains, Accessory Bar Mount, Fwd Storage Cabinet, Aft Storage System, Portable Oxygen Mount, Cabin Flood Lights, Cabin Reading Lights, Loading Lights, Supplemental Strobe Lights, Super Nightscanner, PROPAQ MD Mount, Ventilator Mount, Extruded Aluminium Cabin Floor, Pivoting Litre System with Lifeport AeroSled and Med Deck, Secondary Patient Restraint, Seating for up to five passengers, Cabin Overhead Module supporting four audio panels and four equipment control touch panels, Medical Equipment Rack, 10 Litre LOX (526-RTI Aero ORB), Medical Suction, Medical Air, Dual Gas Towers, IV Support Rail and a Medical Inverter.

The complete EMS kit has an approved Flight Manual Supplemental covering weight and balance considerations, basic operations and system descriptions. [Metro]



**MONTANA:** An Idaho-based air ambulance company has opened for business in Gallatin County. The company, Summit Air Ambulance, opened in Belgrade and hopes to offer its medical planes and helicopters for emergencies.

The company also offers services in northern Nevada and Idaho, but this is its first Montana location. The company is in Belgrade partly because of Gallatin County's growing population. The company has hired 13 employees, including nurses, paramedics, pilots and a mechanic. Staff members will be working with the Bozeman Deaconess Hospital and the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office to offer their services when needed. They could help with search and rescue efforts, or respond to help patients injured in remote areas or suffering from heart attacks or strokes.

One to two patients can be carried in the helicopter, which is outfitted with medical equipment, night vision goggles for the pilot and the "Max-Viz" infrared camera.

**NORTH DAKOTA:** Spectrum Aeromed announced today that they have completed customizing a Pilatus PC-12 with a single system medical interior for Grand Forks, North Dakota based Valley Med Flight. The PC-12 will be stationed in Williston, North Dakota.

The Air Ambulance equipped PC-12 has all the vital life-saving equipment needed to help transport critical patients to hospitals for treatment. The interior is configured with a single advanced life support system, a manual patient loading system and a stretcher bridge to transport patients from the aircraft to ground transportation.

The PC-12 also will be able to serve a large footprint in the western part of North Dakota, Valley Med Flight has three aircraft in their fleet and has been in operation for more than a year. They have transported more than 200 patients in an area where Spectrum Aeromed is headquartered.



Also in North Dakota, last month Metro Aviation delivered the first of three Eurocopter EC145's to Sanford Health. Two more of the same type will join the fleet later this year.

The aircraft is complete with a full EMS configuration, operational options, single pilot IFR and air conditioning. In addition, this aircraft is equipped with the internal 10 Litre LOX system. Metro Aviation, Inc. currently offers single and dual external gas as well as single external LOX systems. Due to the concerns of the customer about the harsh winter environment, the request was made to place the LOX in the aft cabin cabinet. The modification was facilitated by Metro's initial design of the cabinet anticipating the future needs of a customer such as Sanford Health.

Sanford Health plans to have this aircraft in service by the beginning of February at the Sioux Falls, ND location, replacing the Bell products currently in use for HEMS. The arrival is part of a fleet wide upgrade that also sees the fixed wing types replaced. The Sanford air fleet will have eight aircraft, including a backup helicopter based in Sioux Falls. It will have 38 pilots and 10 mechanics. [Metro/Sanford]



## UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON: Some secrecy still surrounds the future use of a newly registered Eurocopter EC145. Last month the UK CAA allocated the registration G-LFRS to the EC145 c/n 9488 owned by Eurocopter UK at Oxford.

*Editor: So far it is assumed that the "FRS" part of this registration refers to "Fire and Rescue Service", and the probably L refers to - London, Lancashire or Lincolnshire, and there is only really one contender for that.*



## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### AUSTRALIA

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Surf Life Saving WA's new Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter has commenced patrols of Perth's metropolitan coast after being imported from New Zealand. The AgustaWestland AW119ke Koala aircraft is a significant upgrade on the previous helicopter leased by SLSWA over the past three summer seasons.

Additional funding from the State Government of Western Australia was allocated to SLSWA to allow the helicopter to patrol every day until the end of April 2012, an additional 77 flying days compared to the 2010/11 season.



TUSCANY: The anniversary year of the sinking of the Titanic brought into sharp focus industry worries about supposedly unsinkable ships and the chances of large numbers of passengers surviving a major catastrophe at sea.

Fortunately for the 4,000 souls on the Costa Concordia, the vessel was able to run itself aground before it turned on its side so catastrophically. It is all too clear that adding a few nautical miles to the distance the vessel had to travel before being able to beach itself might well have been a stretch of sea too far and might have led to a disaster with numbers that would put Titanic in the shade.

The passengers were distracted by the range of entertainments and food they had paid good money for and crew were clearly as unaware or blasé about the growing danger just

as the crew of the 'unsinkable' Titanic had been a century ago. Even after the wine glasses, forks and plates smashed to the ground, and the ship tilted it seems no-one was putting the passengers into lifeboats. For so long indeed that the angle of the vessel meant the numbers of lifeboats available diminished. Insufficient lifeboats killed thousands 1912 and it was in imminent danger of killing twice as many in 2012. Fortunately in this case the vessel did not sink into the depths.

What followed was a terrifying, chaotic escape from the luxury liner crippled by a 160-foot gash in its hull, damage probably worse than that suffered by the Titanic. The fact that there was no finite account of even who was aboard the ship is almost a minor matter.

The Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> grounding of the Concordia was one of the most dramatic cruise ship accidents in recent memory and it raised many obvious questions in the media about why it hit a reef so close to the Tuscan island of Giglio, whether there was a power failure causing the crew to lose control and why the true gravity of the situation was kept from the passengers.

The major question that has so far been in the background is how many would have died if the situation had arisen 5 miles off the coast? Like the Titanic this vessel was clearly doomed from the start – arguably the Concordia's situation deteriorated at a faster rate than that of Titanic - and yet the crew were stopping the passengers, many elderly, taking to the only hope they had of survival – the boats. It may be that the industry advice on best practice that the best place for that many passengers is aboard the ship was adhered to too long, the effect was the same.

Helicopters featured in the post accident footage but not that many of them. Just how many helicopter sorties would it have taken to rescue those without lifeboats? This sinking was nearly the cruise industry's worst case scenario come true.

*Ed: The Titanic sailed in April 1912 with 2,200 passengers and crew, 1,500 people died and 700 survived due to a mix of insufficient lifeboats and the deep cold of the sea.*



## NEW ZEALAND

The Nelson Marlborough Rescue Helicopter Trust have cited the natural disaster events which hit the community during 2011 shows the importance of the region having a rescue helicopter service. The arrival of the service's new Eurocopter BK117 rescue helicopter to complement an existing AS350 Squirrel is timely as the region moves into the busiest time of the year.

The BK117 helicopter is now in operation and allows the service to meet the new higher rescue helicopter standards and future proofs the service with IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) capability.

The Trust is now in its 20<sup>th</sup> and in that time has increased rescue sorties from some 40 missions annually to nearly 400 a year.

The Trust entered into a sponsorship agreement with Summit Real Estate in March 2007, and this has eased the pressure on securing other areas of fundraising. Summit has provided almost \$400,000 in sponsorship

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## UNITED KINGDOM

**NATIONAL:** The Secretary of State for Transport Justine Greening issued a written reply to Parliament last month that clarified some of the detail relating to the new SAR contracts. Following the cancellation of the SAR-H Private Finance Initiative in February, the Department for Transport has now published a notice in the Official Journal of the European Union to commence procurement for a new UK wide service contract to provide a search and rescue capability provided by civilian crews, enabling the Armed Forces to focus activity on their front line operations after the new system is in place.

Bidders for the future service will be able to put forward options which will utilise a mixed fleet of modern helicopters based on the capabilities required at each of the bases (such as range, carrying capacity and endurance). The services will be capable of delivery by different contractors providing complementary services.

The introduction of a modern fleet of fast, reliable helicopters will lead to major improvements in the capability available from the present mix of helicopters. Modern helicopters operating from 10 full-time bases can not only continue to meet all current service requirements but also provide faster flying times to a large part of the UK search and rescue region, as well as providing a more reliable service. This will therefore be reflected in the new contract. SAR operations will cease at RAF Boulmer in 2015 and at MCA Portland when the interim arrangements that were announced in July expire.

The minister expects to award a contract in early 2013 to give the future service provider time to mobilise the new capability. [HMG]

## UNITED STATES

**DEEPWATER:** The US Coast Guard's \$27billion "Deepwater" acquisition programme is officially dead, both as a concept and as a procurement program, a senior official has declared.

Rear Admiral Jake Korn, assistant commandant for acquisition and chief acquisition officer, said the agency's ambitious but troubled program to modernise its marine and air assets that started in 2002 was now in its final days.

The Integrated Deepwater Systems program began as a \$17 billion multi-year procurement to produce much-needed cutters, patrol boats and other vessels and aircraft for the Coast Guard to replace its aging fleet. The prime contract was awarded to Integrated Coast Guard Systems, a joint venture owned by Lockheed Martin Corp. and Northrop Grumman Corp.



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## INDUSTRY

**Broadcast Microwave Services, Inc. (BMS)** has announced its next generation airborne transmitter, the Heli-Coder 4 (HC4). The product is designed for fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft, and is small enough that it can also be used in watercraft, land, unmanned air or ground vehicle applications. Among the new technological features in the HC4 are:

1. Transmits HD (high definition) or SD (standard definition) video;
2. Offers choice of video compression using H.264 or MPEG-2 to be compatible with existing receive site equipment;
3. Configurable Ethernet port for transmitting streaming IP (Internet protocol) data;
4. GPS (global positioning system) receiver and data interface for tracking and mapping purposes;
5. 10 W RF output power in a compact case, only 5" W x 9" D x 6" H (127 x 229 x 153 mm);
6. Geo-Point™ capable: Geo-Point is BMS' proprietary receive site software that uses metadata from the aircraft video camera to display at the receiver, the bearing and distance of the target video location from the compatible BMS receiver.

BMS President and General Manager, Graham Bunney, commented on the announcement, saying, "With the HC4, BMS once again advances the state of the art for the airborne transmitter market for law enforcement, surveillance and broadcast applications. With more and more customers demanding HD transmission, the HC4 provides the latest in H.264 compression technology with an option to include MPEG-2 compression to maintain backwards compatibility and investment protection to existing legacy products. In addition, the HC4's Ethernet port can be configured to transmit high data rate IP, or to multiplex the IP data in with the compressed video. This is important in today's multi-sensor environment." [www.bms-inc.com](http://www.bms-inc.com) • [sales@bms-inc.com](mailto:sales@bms-inc.com)

**Sikorsky** anticipates FAA certification of the S-434 light turbine early this year. The S-434 is an improved version of the S-333 with a four-blade head and 300 more pounds in gross weight, taking the total to 2,850 pounds all up. Additionally it has a new tail rotor with 20% increased thrust, and structurally improved skids. The main rotor and transmission come from the Fire Scout unmanned helicopter that have always incorporated a batch of improvements over the S-333, which in turn implies that the R&D effort has been military-funded, at least in part.

Some S-434s are already flying in the military role, including a batch in Saudi Arabia. The S-434 continues to use the same turbine Rolls-Royce 205-C20W turboshaft as the S-333, rated at 320 shp.

**INDRA** is developing a next generation airborne surveillance aircraft based on the Italian Tecnam. The Tecnam MRI (Multisensor Reconnaissance and Identification) is part of a multi-company effort including Tecnam, SELEX Galileo, FLIR Systems and Airborne Technologies GmbH, the Austrian based Remote Sensing and Sensor Integration company. Specifically developed to patrol those maritime zones currently kept under surveillance by coastguards utilising medium-size helicopters and large maritime patrol aircraft, The Tecnam MRI affords significant opportunities for clients seeking more efficient and effective maritime security and costal patrol missions.

Equipped with a state of the art radar, AIS vessel ID system and EO device the Tecnam MRI will be able to effectively patrol an area from 50 to 200 nautical miles offshore. With medium size helicopters limited to a productive mission profile of only 100 miles, before the advent of the Tecnam MRI, operators have been limited to using much larger and costlier maritime patrol aircraft to monitor activities in the 200 mile zone.

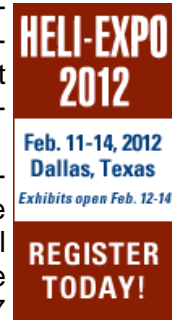
The aircraft will make its public debut at Aero Marrakech in April. [Airborne Technologies]

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**Marengo Swisshelicopter** will again be exhibiting its new concept light single-turbine SKYe SH09 helicopter at the Heli-Expo in Dallas this month. The manufacturer is expected to present the full-size, full carbon-fibre pre-prototype at Booth 4417. The construction of the first prototype is progressing with first deliveries planned for 2015.

The new helicopter offers a MTOW of 2,800 kg (6,170 lbs) and promises exceptional hot and high performance, a flexible engine concept and a low noise signature thanks to the newly developed dynamic assemblies and shrouded tail-rotor. The modularity of the cabin makes the most of the flat floor and the unique high ceiling, offering multiple seating arrangements of 1 Pilot + up to 7 passengers, all with individual crashworthy seats.



General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems develops stabilised high-definition (HD) gimbals, electro-optical infrared (EO/IR) cameras, precision optical components, and motion control products that are further improved as integrated solutions to meet the challenges for high-definition and long-range infrared imaging systems.

**General Dynamics Global Imaging Technologies** offers the highest accuracy image stabilization, premier optical surfaces along with motion control tolerances including long-range surveillance cameras, advanced weapons systems, and highly precise imaging telescopes. Customer that benefit from this service include homeland security, systems integrators, U.S. military, and law enforcement agencies, broadcast and film production companies and global customers requiring aerial and perimeter surveillance applications.

General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems has been further expanded through the acquisition of Axsys Technologies in 2009, which promoted the operation of high-performance EO/IR camera systems, its components. It also establishes a basis for launching advanced innovative technologies.

A new naming convention has been adopted specifically for the company's own products such as pan or tilt systems and camera systems that would facilitate identification of solutions based on the customer's requirement.

General Dynamics Global Imaging Technologies will progress with the manufacture of the Cineflex brand of cameras that are employed for renowned productions like the BBC's Planet Earth, the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics ceremonies and numerous motion pictures and various other television shows.

Civil Aviation Administration of China [**CAAC**] has certified the 13-tonne AC313. The AC313 was developed by government-owned manufacturer AVIC from the Harbin Z-8, itself relying very heavily on the 1960s French design – the SA321 Super Frelon—which it closely resembles.

AVIC will be marketing the AC313 for a range of airborne emergency services roles including air ambulance, rescues, forest fire fighting and transportation.

US air ambulance company **AirMed** International has announced it has become the first company to sell air medical evacuation memberships in Asia. AirMed operates its own fleet of customized medical jet aircraft and offers comprehensive service to members who are hospitalised while travelling. Before the announced expansion into Asia AirMed's annual memberships were limited to North America.

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AirMed Global Asia is to widen the scope of its membership to include travellers from Hong Kong, Macau and the People's Republic of China (PRC).

AirMed Global membership includes air medical transport when the member is hospitalised more than 300km from home.

The next-generation **Eurocopter EC175** is viewed by many to be a direct response by Eurocopter to the AW139 but figures just released show that the type may compare more evenly with the more recent AW189 helicopter. The EC175 will incorporate significantly increased range and payload capacity over earlier figures when it enters service at the end of this year, and will be the first seven metric ton-category helicopter delivered with such capabilities.



Eurocopter announced a baseline payload/radius-of-action capacity with 16 passengers at 135 nautical miles when configured for offshore oil and gas missions, out-performing any medium-lift helicopter on the market in terms of competitiveness. This represents a 30% performance increase compared with the initial performance baseline. For longer-range missions, EC175 can transport 12 passengers to a radius of action of 190 nautical miles.

Eurocopter has launched the development of a 18 passengers configuration option, aiming at carrying those 18 passengers to a radius-of-action of 100 nautical miles.

Eurocopter state that the EC175 programme is progressing well, with first deliveries to the oil and gas industry targeted in late 2012. Operations in the airborne emergency services sphere will come later as ongoing testing continues to validate the EC175's rugged design, including cold and hot weather trials, bird strike tests, and gearbox operation for 30 minutes after loss of oil. Two EC175 prototypes have logged more than 270 flight hours to date and industrial activity is continuing.

**North American Surveillance Systems Inc.**, (NASS) has been awarded multiple contracts for the US Air Force Blue Devil Block II Airship.

NASS brings its extensive experience in aircraft systems wiring to the 370-foot long airship project that is seven times the size of the more familiar Goodyear blimp and will be deployed for surveillance missions over Afghanistan early in 2012.

The project requires thousands of feet of specialised wires and harnesses for the airship's surveillance data processing supercomputer systems and engineers are creating the 800,000 feet or 151 miles of wiring required for the airship's two gondolas in NASS' hangar facility north of Orlando, Florida.

NASS has been given the contract for the complete installation and integration of the cockpit control console and NASS will also provide assistance in the integration into the surveillance airship which is located in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. [www.nassusa.net](http://www.nassusa.net)



**Helishow**  
DUBAI 2012  
[www.dubaihelicoptershow.com](http://www.dubaihelicoptershow.com)

**DUBAI HELISHOW 2012**  
International Civil and Military Helicopter  
Technology & Operations Exhibition  
6th - 8th November 2012, East Hall  
Dubai Airport Expo Centre, Dubai, U.A.E.



Rafael Advanced Defense Systems has completed the acquisition of 50% of Controp shares. **Controp** have operated in the security and military market since 1988, developing and producing electro-optic security and surveillance systems including the POP.

In Bengaluru, India the Helicopter Academy to Train by Simulation of Flying (HATSOFF), the joint venture owned equally by **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited** (HAL) and CAE, announced that its simulator cockpit for the Eurocopter AS365N3 Dauphin helicopter has been certified to Level D, the highest qualification for flight simulators, by India's Directorate General Civil Aviation (DGCA) as well as the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

HATSOFF also announced that its three simulator cockpits - a Bell 412, a HAL civil/conventional Dhruv, and the Eurocopter AS365N3 Dauphin - have been certified as Level 2 (JAR)/Level 6 (FAA) flight training devices (FTDs) when used as fixed-base, non-motion simulators in the docking station installed at HATSOFF.

The first cockpit delivered to HATSOFF represented the Bell 412 helicopter and training for Bell 412 operators began in July 2010. The second cockpit delivered to HATSOFF represented the civil/conventional variant of the Dhruv and training began in May 2011.

The HATSOFF training centre, located near HAL's headquarters features multimedia classrooms, computer-based training, brief/debrief facilities, a training management information system and crew accommodations.

**Robinson Helicopter** Company continues to be the world's leading producer of civil helicopters. In 2011, the company produced 356 helicopters (212 R44s, 88 R66s and 56 R22s), more than double 2010's production of 162.

While the R44 remains Robinson's top selling helicopter, the response to its latest model, the R66 Turbine, has been very strong. The R66 was FAA certificated in October 2010. As of December 31, 2011, total orders received for the new model exceeded 360.

Robinson enters 2012 with a backlog of more than 400 aircraft orders making production a top priority. The company has expanded its manufacturing space and is continuing to increase its workforce. Other priorities for 2012 include foreign validation of the R66 and FAA certification of new options for the R66 including floats and a police version.

Several filings with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office by **Bell Helicopter** Textron in late December provide strong hints of new product announcements likely to come next month at Helicopter Association International's Heli-Expo convention in Dallas. According to the filings, Bell is requesting trademarks for "525SMT," "Magellan" and "407GT."

Magellan could be a new brand created by the company for a future family of helicopters, although some have suggested it may be no more than a 412 upgrade.

The 525SMT is believed to be a larger helicopter than the company's current medium-twin 412 and could be a "Super Medium Transport" that would go head-to-head with the AgustaWestland AW189, again some suggest the rebirth of something we have seen before and aimed at the offshore oil and gas market.

The 407GT could be an enhanced performance version of Bell's big single, possibly with a new engine. Bell had fielded a 407 modified with a 970-shp Honeywell HTS900-2 turboshaft for the Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH) program, which was cancelled by the Army in 2008. [AIN]



PRODUCED BY



**Airwave** has successfully trialed and tested the communication network to be used by non-emergency personnel during the London 2012 Games, including a system that uses equipment deployed in light aircraft, in support of the three cycling events.

The road cycling events presenting unique challenges given the length of the course and attendant issues around logistics and traffic management. Airwave will deploy a solution by using radio repeater equipment operated from two light aircraft flying above, which relayed radio signals from users on the ground to the control centre and vice versa.

Top cyclists from around the world will pass through six London boroughs, with the start/finish taking place at the Mall in London. The men's Olympic road cycling race takes place on Saturday, 28 July 2012 over a distance of 250km (approximately 156 miles). The women's race, which takes place on Sunday, 29 July 2012, will cover an area of 140km (approximately 87 miles).

The Olympic Cycling Time Trial will be taking place on Wednesday, 1 August 2012 for both the men and women. The route will commence at Hampton Court Palace and go through the London Boroughs of Richmond and Kingston and the Surrey borough of Elmbridge.



## AIR ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

**5 December 2011 Beech 400A N490AM** Air ambulance of Mayo Clinic Minneapolis. After departing from Great Falls Montana with a patient on-board the under carriage failed to retract. Flight abandoned and aircraft returned to airport. [Concern]

**28 December 2011 Cessna TU206G PNC 0291** Police National Colombia. Crashed in the proximity of the Airport Santiago Pérez of Arauca, reportedly while landing there. Five persons were reported injured and they were transported from the site by a Colombian Air Force King Air 350. [Media]

**7 January 2012 Helicopter. Air ambulance.** The helicopter taking a patient to a Charleston hospital, in South Carolina had to make an emergency landing after the patient fought with the crew and tried to leap from the aircraft. Paramedics were called after the 26-year-old labourer jumped from an SUV going 70 mph on Interstate 95. As he had serious injuries paramedics called a helicopter. While in the air the man broke loose and started fighting the crew. The pilot was able to land safely. [Media]

**13 January 2012 AgustaWestland AW139 N.** New Jersey State Police. The helicopter landed in a grassy area at the Canoe Brook Country Club across from The Mall at Short Hill, New Jersey as a safety precaution during a spell of bad weather. The aircraft was on the way to the Morristown Municipal Airport. [Media]

**15 January 2012 Helicopter.** Border Security Force, India. Aircraft crashed during a test flight at Mana Airport near Raipur, India. It was at a height of 100 feet when an undisclosed failure sent it crashing to the ground injuring the three persons on board. [NDTV]

**15 January 2012 Pilatus PC-12 C-FPCN.** Air ambulance of Air Bravo Corporation. Aircraft on an IFR flight from Hornepayne Airport to Timmins Victor M Power Airport, Northern Ontario, Canada. The flight crew declared emergency due to engine failure when 5 minutes out. They landed on runway 10 at 0322z and came to a stop 1500' past the end of the runway on the north side of centre line. Two pilots and one paramedic on board. Air Bravo planes are routinely used for air ambulance work and commercial charters in Timmins. It has not been revealed whether the plane was configured for air ambulance service or charter work at the time of the incident. [Timmins]

**17 January 2012 Eurocopter AS350B C-FMPG** Royal Canadian Mounted Police helicopter undertaking a training exercise around Cultus Lake, Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada and about to return to its base when it crashed to the east of the lake fatally injuring the civilian directly employed pilot Dave Brolin, 46 years. Brolin died at the scene. Aircraft largely intact but a write off, no fire. [Media/Helihub]

## FLIGHT SAFETY

Federal investigators said two fatal medical helicopter crashes within the last two years were caused by pilots trying to outrun storms - one was on a 2009 South Carolina crash, the other on one in 2010 in Tennessee. The NTSB released both reports last month.

In South Carolina the pilot should not have tried to fly through storms to his home base in Conway after dropping off a patient at a Charleston hospital. He and two on board were killed.

The pilot of the AS350 involved in the Brownsville, Tennessee crash was also was trying to outrun a storm and in trying to return to its base but crashed in a field close to its base killing all three aboard. [AikenStandard]

## SEAT BELTS ON PLEASE!

*An occasional column of muddy waters*

Helihub ran the story about Bell and Vector EADS playing tag with law suites and commented that it was like a couple of children playing – “you take me to court and I’ll take you to court in return.”

In December, Vector took Bell to Alabama Middle Court alleging they are blocking Vector getting MRO work in Alabama and NW Florida contrary to a long standing practice of certifying Vector as qualified to repair Bell helicopters. The action has led to a decline in Vector’s business as well as the near term loss of dozens of jobs and the long-term danger that the Andalusia facility might close.

In a later move last month Bell filed a suit against Vector for Trademark Infringement in the Texas Northern courts – and that rings a bell [or Bell] .... Didn’t Eurocopter EADS kick Bell a few times over some trademark infringement over the design of the Bell 429 skids – I wonder if there is a connection?



Some of you may have read an article originally published by Macau Business on its website headlined “Sky Shuttle Sells Helicopters” in which it claimed Sky Shuttle had “sold four of its five AgustaWestland AW139 helicopters and continues to operate with Sikorsky S76C+ helicopters”.

The effect of this was disastrous publicity for the manufacturer and it soon became obvious that Sky Shuttle had actually sold four of its old Sikorsky S76C+ helicopters, the ones that had been withdrawn from service in 2009 when they were replaced by the AW139.

A pair of helicopter spotters sparked a major terrorist alert after driving into an RAF base 'to have a look around'. The pair were apparently waved through a checkpoint on the base – RAF Odiham in Hampshire where the Surrey Police element of the South East Air Support unit is based for its safety after attacks at its old base.

The duo were left alone for a full ten minutes before the military realized that the two civilians happily taking pictures of Chinooks and Lynx helicopters should not really be there.

Salesmen Max Awad, 30, and Addison Bridet, 29, say they had no idea they had done anything wrong until they too thought it was odd that they were the only civilian visitors to an 'Open Day.' For them the clue was that there were 'no refreshment stalls' but they got an added clue when a host of armed military men swooped on them and locked them up a few hours. [Sun]

*Ed: Apparently the MoD who had simply waved them in among a line of traffic is still insisting that security had not been compromised. You could not make it up!*

A game producing company called Electronic Arts is seeking First Amendment protections in an upcoming legal dispute with the maker of military helicopters featured in its game *Battlefield*.

In late December Textron, the parent company of Bell Helicopters, asked EA to stop using images of Bell helicopters in the computer game. In response EA went to court to take out a pre-emptive suit against Textron, saying the helicopters are incorporated under "fair use." the Bell helicopters aren't highlighted or given any great distinction in the game. The company have been here before and last time they won against an image that had the uncanny likeness of a sports player.

Media across the globe took great pleasure in highlighting an accident played out before the cameras in Mexico. Medics were being followed by a camera crew as they collected a transplant heart and flew it across the country in a LearJet and then a Bell police helicopter. Efforts to get the organ to its destination in time for a life-saving operation almost came unstuck just metres from its destination.

Two medics dashing off the dark blue Bell helicopter 06 with the large plastic cool box on wheels stumbled and accidentally unlocked the lid – it tipped and ejected the heart onto the pavement. Scooping it off the ground with their bare hands, the men placed the organ back in its icy storage leaving a bag of saline on the ground behind them as they rushed towards the operating room.

Despite the mishap the doctor in charge of the operation was not too concerned and as the heart was well protected packed in three layers it was still used. Just another slow news day it seems.

Although every policeman in the land reputedly has a wrist watch and a mobile phone and a PDA of some sort — mostly personal high technology provided at great cost — it is claimed that when parted from a multitude of desktop devices the staff of the London Metropolitan Police are driven to make over 50,000 telephone calls each year to the speaking clock at a cost of 31p each.

The Met spent a total of £16,879 calling the speaking clock in 2010/11, down from £18,402 the previous year.

A spokesman said: "We are committed to reducing such costs. It must be remembered that a huge number of our officers and staff will not have direct access to the Internet as they are not office-based." I think he made it up.

## EVENTS

### EVENT POSTPONED

Smi's inaugural Transport Security event to be held at the Copthorne Tara Hotel, in London on 13-14 February 2012 has been postponed. The cancellation message was issued early in January barely a month before the event was scheduled to run and drawing into question how many potential exhibitors and visitors suffered financially.

Smi Group Limited, 122-124 Great Guildford Business Square, 30 Great Guildford Street, London, SE1 0HS +44 (0) 20 7827 6066 [www.smi-online.co.uk](http://www.smi-online.co.uk)

Another lost event is HELICHINA which was to be held 11-13 April, 2012, this is 'postponed.'

## EVENT PLUS

The new event, Transport Security may have fallen at the first fence, but there is always another event in its wake with similar ideals and BAPCO has at least been on before.

2011 was the year that saw civil unrest in the UK, and worldwide, on an unprecedented scale; from the rioting that took place across the country in August, to the Occupy London Stock Exchange movement, which began in October and still continues to the present day. All in all it's been a testing year for the UK's frontline services and social media has been instrumental in the organisation of unrest, in responding to members of the public to address their concerns and even in connecting with those people engaged in acts of civil disobedience.

Some frontline services have been praised for their engagement across social media channels, while others have been criticised for their lack of it, but a forum has yet to be established for discussing the issues and providing thoughts on best practice, until now....

BlueLightCamp is a totally new, day-long 'unconference' style event, taking place on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2012 between 9am and 5pm at Manchester Central exhibition centre. Pre-registration is required but it will be a **free**, open and fluidic day of [sharing experiences](#), [thoughts](#) and [best practice](#) across all Blue Light Services.

Visitors can pre-register at <http://bluelightcamp12.eventbrite.co.uk/>. In mid-January there were just 130 tickets left so early registration is recommended. It's free to attend.

BlueLightCamp is working in partnership with The British Associated Public-Safety Communications Officers (BAPCO) to deliver this event before the annual **Exhibition and Development Sessions**, which takes place from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012. <http://www.bapco.org.uk/events/>

## COUNTER TERROR EXPO LONDON 25-26 April 2012

An eye catching title but mainly a cover for a security show the event has always included airborne emergency services content. From a list supplied last month the editor deduces that the following are attending companies exhibiting products with strong links to the aviation sector but there will certainly be others: -

Broadcast Microwave Services Europe	Diamond Aircraft
Digital RF	FLIR Systems
Fujifilm Europe	ITT Defence
Nikon UK	Ovation Systems
Panasonic UK	Peli Products
Pentax Imaging	

## POLICE AVIATION

### 5-6 June 2012 Hangelar, Bonn, Germany

The fourth independent PAVCon Police Aviation Conference in Europe continues to grow exponentially and attract airborne law enforcement attendees from across the world market. This year the event is taking place at the headquarters of the Federal Police in Germany and will include a programme drawing on the experience of law enforcement speakers from Europe and the United States. The majority of the speakers will be from operational backgrounds and their subject matter will primarily address Crew Resource Management and allied subjects. The location of the police heliport adjoining the Hangelar light airfield is ideally suited for both rotary and fixed wing displays to attend and be displayed. The police base has over 100 aircraft based and a near neighbour is the ADAC air rescue training organisation [who are scheduled to speak at the event]. This will be a truly exceptional opportunity to address the European law enforcement community in one central location offering easy access to potential delegates and exhibitors without the necessity of flying in. Fuller details and booking forms can be found on the PAVCon Police Aviation Conference website at [www.pavcon.org](http://www.pavcon.org)

**22-23 October 2012 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.**

The second Police Aviation Asia Conference in cooperation with, and support of, the Royal Malaysia Police Air Unit will be a two day conference and exhibition. Asia is rapidly developing its Airborne

Law Enforcement capability with active sales of helicopters, sensors and vital operational technologies on the cards in the region. Malaysia is intending to grow its current Police Air Wing by procuring and operating a mixture of light and medium twin-engined helicopters - the plan is to increase its aviation fleet by 18 over the next 4 years. Others in the region also have expansion plans. An exciting line-up of international experts will be invited to share their knowledge and experience with regional Police Aviation delegates and to debate current technologies, training and tactics being employed by Police Aviation units from around the world. Further information about this event will be available in due course.

**DIARY**

*We were last in Dallas for the HAI Heli-Expo in 2006. Look out for the Special Edition of Police Aviation News later this month covering this years Heli-Expo.*

*We are expecting some new plans and new airframes from Bell Helicopter but as ever these events are about the unexpected announcements.*

*Look out for the new report towards the end of February.*

14-19 February 2012 Singapore Airshow. The Singapore Airshow, among the world's Top 3 aviation events, is the largest aerospace and defence event in Asia. Singapore Airshow serves as a global marketplace and networking powerhouse for the world's aviation community and has always been greeted with tremendous support from industry players, solidly maintaining its position as Asia's largest and top three aerospace and defence events in the world. Singapore Airshow features a series of high-level conferences dedicated to leading players in the global aviation industry - the Singapore Airshow Aviation Leadership Summit (ALS), the Asia-Pacific Security Conference, Unmanned Systems Conference and the Land Defence Conference. It is open to trade visitors from noon on Tuesday 14 February until Friday 17 February at 5pm. It is also open to the public at the weekend. [www.singaporeairshow.com](http://www.singaporeairshow.com)



28-29 February 2012 UAS Training and Simulation Chelsea Football Club, London, UK. Will include papers on Integrating UAV s Into Non-Segregated Air Space: The Work Of The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA ) presented by Lt. Col Gerry Corbett, Directorate of Air Space Policy, CAA and a Roadmap For The Integration Of UA S Into General Airspace in the EASA area presented by Jens Fehler, Principal UAV Officer, European Defence Agency and Training UAS Pilots For Operations In Civilian Air Space a presentation from Switzerland given by Major Daniel Boehm, Chief, Pilot Training, Swiss Air Force. [www.iqpc.com](http://www.iqpc.com)

Coming next month—but only if you are in the UK for the early part of this year—the editor is working with Epping Forest District Museum in Waltham Abbey to set up a police history exhibition that will include some aviation elements.

More next month on this exhibition **Peelers Progress**, to be open from early March to late June 2012.





## Search and Rescue

A new 'blockbuster' exhibition from National Maritime Museum Cornwall that invites the public to enter the world of the rescue services.

Opening on 16 March 2012, the exhibition embraces interactive technology and some imaginative scene building to provide a stimulating and emotive experience of the role of the maritime rescue services. *Search and Rescue* celebrates the work of the RNLI, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, HM Coastguard and other organisations.

The displays include a 70ft Sea King helicopter loaned by the MOD. The airframe is painted in the colours of both the Royal Navy and RAF Search and Rescue (SAR) services (red and grey one side and yellow on the other) and is available to climb inside.

Other interactive opportunities for children include the chance to dress as a pilot, listen to accounts from the crew and from those that have been rescued, explore their lifesaving equipment and discover the world of the Royal Navy and RAF SAR teams. In addition visitors can place themselves in a coastguard hot seat, making the life or death decisions to bring in the right service for the rescue.

Ben Lumby, Exhibitions Manager of National Maritime Museum Cornwall, says: "This is our biggest and most ambitious exhibition to date but more importantly it is the first time anyone has celebrated the maritime rescue services in this way."

Throughout the two year life of the exhibition there will be a number of events including air sea rescue demonstrations, 'meet the crew' days and opportunities to climb aboard an RNLI all-weather lifeboat. To keep up to date with what's on when, visit [www.nmmc.co.uk/](http://www.nmmc.co.uk/)



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