

Police Aviation News

©Police Aviation Research

Issue 290

June 2020

NORWAY EXPANDS AIR POLICE CAPABILITY

COVID-19 DRIVERS

PC-24 in ALASKA

Manned v Drone

Which will win?

CAP offers the lower logistics option

LAW ENFORCEMENT

ARGENTINA

©Metro Aviation

BUENOS AIRES: Metro Aviation based in Shreveport, Louisiana, USA has delivered two refurbished Airbus Helicopters AS350 B3 to the Ministry of Security of the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The refurbishments included mandated 12-year inspections of the aircraft.

The overhauls involved many comprehensive repairs. Upon the aircraft's arrival, the Metro team identified several areas of need involving lower blade corrosion, interior upholstery damage, and windshield impairment to name a few. In addition to repairs, the completion centre outfitted the helicopters with a fast rope system for air-to-ground police transport, an upgraded avionics system and a premium paint service.

These completions mark the third aircraft Metro delivered to this South American customer, solidifying three years of partnership.

BOTSWANA

POLICE: Trakka Systems based in *Moorabbin, Australia* have announced that it has been selected, through its local representative SAFOMAR, for the installation of A800 searchlights and TC-300S multi sensor cameras onto the new Botswana Police Enstrom 480B Helicopters.

The Botswana Police Air Support division chose Trakka's range of products following a lengthy and detailed tender and acquisition process. In service the Enstrom 480Bs will be used for crime prevention, wildlife conservation, command & control and search and rescue.



©Trakka

CAYMAN ISLANDS

POLICE: Different countries have applied the name 'lockdown' to their home situation but many of them are different. Most do not involve a rigid curfew. The Cayman Islands lockdown includes a strict regime of stay indoors and reinforces it with a strict night time curfew that is adhered to by at least 99% of the population.

COVER: In Alaska the North Slope Borough Search and Rescue now flies a Pilatus PC-24 air ambulance. In the northernmost territory on the United States the PC-24 provides basic medical care for the residents. The operation is run by the municipal government. The new PC-24 is fitted with tandem LifePort™ AeroSled™ stretchers and five passenger seats and it replaces an older LearJet 31.

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



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

SPONSORS

Avalex
 Broadcast Microwave
 Britannia 2000 Holdings
 CarteNav
 FLIR Systems
 L3 Harris/Wescam
 RDDS
 Trakka Systems
 Vislink

www.avalex.com
www.bms-inc.com
www.b2kholdings.co.uk
www.cartenav.com
www.flir.com
www.wescam.com
www.rdds.co.uk
www.trakkasystems.com
www.vislink.com

Airborne Public Safety Association

www.publicsafetyaviation.org#

The air support unit has been pivotal in helping enforce the new laws, designed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The helicopters are able to sweep the island in less than an hour, the manned surveillance being supplemented by drones mainly surveying the white sand and blue water beaches. Since March the police helicopter crews have been on duty in three shifts, allowing the capacity to operate round

Get Comprehensive Mission Solutions. Get Avalex.



SINCE 1992 Avalex Technologies has provided law enforcement, SAR and border patrol operators with rugged and reliable avionic and electronics that enhance situational awareness, optimize surveillance capability and ensure safety. Find out how our full range of proven products, along with our integration and customization options, can meet your unique mission needs. Contact us today.

AVALEX
 TECHNOLOGIES
 INNOVATION ON DISPLAY.

www.avalex.com
 UK +44 (0) 7502 229678
dfindley@avalex.com / sales@avalex.com

the clock. Each shift is kept separate and handovers take place in the aircraft hangar. Between shifts, the office and the aircraft are sanitised.

Since the closure of the borders, the unit has been faced with an extraordinary workload flying over 20 hours a week which compares with an average monthly figure of 35 hours.

In early March, before Cayman's first coronavirus case was announced, the air unit was operating in its air ambulance mode providing medical aid to the cruise ship MS Braemar after it was being rejected by port after port because it had COVID-19 on board. The ongoing secondary air ambulance role requires the unit to maintain the cleanliness of the helicopters at all times to meet the requirements of medevac from the Sister Islands. All patients are treated as potential COVID-19 patients. [Cay Compass]



©RCIPS

NORWAY

POLICE: The Norwegian Police operate their own fleet of three Leonardo AW169s. They are assigned to the south of the country, with a base at Taraldrud near to the capital Oslo, where the bulk of the 5.3 million population live.

Norway is 385,207km² (148,729sq miles) in area but is long and narrow placing the north of the country some 1,600km (1,000 miles) from Oslo. Air policing was always going to be problematical and there has been an expectation that the police would acquire more helicopters to undertake a task operating over demanding geography and great distances in often challenging weather and light conditions. Until now police have called upon military helicopters to undertake ad-hoc operations in the remoter areas but the Norwegian Government decided this should stop and be replaced by a commercial arrangement.



©Norway Police

At the end of April one of the solutions to the logistics was announced with a joint police and commercial announcement by Airlift AS marking the opening of a new base in Tromsø in northern Norway. Airlift AS is part of the NHV Group, which has its headquarters in Oostende, Belgium. Airlift AS was established in 1986 and has for over the last 30 years built up considerable experience and expertise in passenger and cargo transportation, as well as search and rescue. Airlift have bases at Førde (Sogn og Fjor-



Parapex Media

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

www.ParapexMedia.com

dane), Kinsarvik (Hordaland), Ljosland (Vest-Agder), Bergen and Hammerfest.

The new facility has been set up by Airlift in association with the Norwegian Police as an additional preparedness resource. Present to mark the opening were the police chief in Troms police district, Astrid Nilsen, Chief of Staff Morten Pettersen, Minister of Justice Monica Mæland and operations manager of Airlift, Erlend Haugsbø along with several unnamed local officers and a police dog called 'Pablo'.

From May 1, Airlift now makes available one of their AW169 on call to the Police, with a one-hour response time 24 hours a day, all year. The helicopter will operate from Tromsø Airport, supporting Troms, Nordland and Finnmark police districts. In winter months, where the location has very few daylight hours, the operator may switch to an Airbus AS332C Super Puma.

Airlift has been selected as a supplier for four years with the possibility of renewal for up to three further years. The contract excludes search, rescue and ambulance missions, which will continue to be handled by other public services.

Airlift is part of NHV and operates three Leonardo AW169s, which they acquired in summer 2017 to fly missions for the Norwegian Coastal Administration for the provision of marine pilotage to larger vessels arriving on the Norwegian coast. They also have an Airbus AS332L1 Super Puma, an AS332C, twelve AS350B3s and two AS350B2s.

The AW 169 have a range of over 470km, and can carry six police in addition to the pilots. Two helicopters will be used to meet the requirement for readiness and response time. In addition, the supplier has a spare helicopter that can be deployed if needed. There is no information on the role equipment carried by the assigned helicopters which suggests they may be primarily used for transportation rather than patrol.

[Airlift/Politi]



FLIR

ELEVATE YOUR VISION WITH 380X

Make informed decisions faster with advanced imaging from 380X. Featuring a new user interface, de-scintillation filter, improved targeting, and multi-tile video, upgrades to the Star SAFIRE® 380 system achieve a new level of awareness and clarity. Enhanced gimbal performance and incoming augmented reality updates will feature mapping overlays for improved operator confidence and reduced workload.

LEARN MORE AT [FLIR.COM/380X](https://www.flir.com/380x)

UNITED KINGDOM

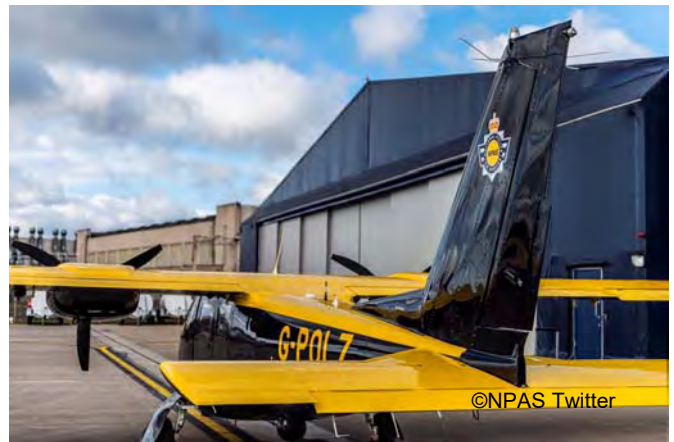
NPAS: Although still somewhat restricted by the pilot availability issue, the fixed wing assets have been busy and earning their keep roaming across England and Wales. Five months after the type was declared ready for operational service, a third P68R is now apparently operating. The airframe is G-POLV operating as UKP155. This aircraft, 498R, was originally registered to the UK in mid-July last year (from the Austrian register OE-FAI) but there is no information stating why it has taken nearly 11 months to bring it to the flight line. [Twitter]

Also, from Twitter is news that the southern basing for the P-68R fleet does not include the grass runway at Redhill, Surrey. The SE Area forward operating base is currently North Weald which features an all-weather paved runway.

According to the POH the P68R may be operated from grass runways, with a performance penalty of +25% for the ground run on dry, presumably, short grass. However, whilst some grass runways are as smooth as a billiard table, others can be pretty bumpy. Could there be a 'local rule' not to operate off bumpy grass runways which could damage the underslung aerials and MX-10 sensor if not the landing gear?

This lack of clarity, and understanding, is partly due to a conscious decision by NPAS not to positively inform. The apparent 'victory' in getting Freedom of Information access to the often heavily redacted Strategic Board minutes last year remains uncertain as we still await the minutes of the scheduled December meeting (six months ago).

The former Merseyside Police and Norwegian Police EC135T2 G-POLU [G-XMII] is located at Oxford with Airbus. Since its return from Norway it was thought to be undergoing a process of rebuild to British police operational standard commensurate with the change in identity to G-POLU. A revelation in Flight Global now shows that the process has not started, and that the airframe remains in its Norwegian police configuration undertaking rotor trials. While the measurement technology is yet to be flight tested the helicopter is at the core of a project to capture data relating to the forces exerted on the blades in a manner that will enable warnings to be given to the pilot of potential safety issues.



SEE MORE. DELIVER MORE.

AIMS MISSION SYSTEM SOFTWARE

- ITAR-FREE
- MULTI-SENSOR INTEGRATION
- DEPLOYED WORLDWIDE

CarteNav SOLUTIONS

As part of a four-year project in collaboration with Cranfield University, BladeSense has fibre optic instrumentation fitted to two main rotor blades and dummy equipment fitted to the other two to ensure dynamic balance. A wireless data link was sent to a remote ground station located 60 metres from the aircraft. So far, the trials have amounted to four hours of ground running to fine tune the installation. Next year it is hoped that a further phase (BladeSense 2) can lead to flight trials.

It seems that the revelations in last month's PAN that NPAS actually fly their aircraft and that they have been seen in the skies worried someone. In recent weeks most of the flight tracker information on the fixed wing aircraft has ceased to be available. That is not really a problem as the other NPAS assets were not readily viewable on most Tracker software either. I assume that as these were new aircraft there had been an oversight on blocking the signal.

Still, fortunately, there are more ways to track an aircraft than electronically! Open shutter camera techniques have offered up sight of G-POLV on one of its first operational sorties over Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire. Certainly, quite artistic but the cops may be confiscating cameras in the area already. [Andy Stones]



Now offering **wireless connectivity...**
bring your **own device**

enterprisecontrol.co.uk | sales@enterprisecontrol.co.uk

UNITED STATES

NATIONAL: Pretty much as expected the Airborne Public Safety Association has cancelled the 2020 APSCON set for late July in Houston, Texas.

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Board decided it would be impractical to conduct the event as scheduled. The factors working against their ability to conduct a successful event included new health precautions (social distancing, masks, hand sanitizing, etc.), reduced travel options, economic recession, people's general crowd aversion, low registration numbers to date and the substantial loss of sponsorship of social networking events, courses, awards, scholarships and other items such as tote bags and name-tags/lanyards that they have traditionally enjoyed.

Rescheduling APSCON 2020 during the fourth quarter of the year was discussed; but it would be too close to the 2021 event in New Orleans and would have a negative impact on both events.

Fallout from the cancellation includes the inability to celebrate the 50th annual conference & exposition in the same city where the inaugural event was held. It is hoped that APSA will be able to add many of the classes from the conference to the live Webinar Training Series already posted on their website and perhaps to develop a plan to present the courses normally conducted during the event as live, online training.

[DBS]

CALIFORNIA: The Placer County Sheriff's Office AS350B3 helicopter N911WL "Falcon 30" is back in service after undergoing some extensive renovations after a decade of service. The most obvious alterations are upgrades to the role fit and includes replacing their 12-years old sensor turret with a newer model offering HD.



PCSO is based at the airport in Auburn, California. They bought the current AStar in April 2009 and it entered service after its role fit at Hangar One in December that year. They had previously been flying an ex-military OH-58 since 1995. The unit also operates a fixed wing Piper PA-31 Navajo "Eagle 2" capable of long distance, high-speed travel. The primary mission of Eagle 2 is the transportation of prisoners, department administration and other county personnel within California and the western states.

In an open letter Sheriff Alex Villanueva the Los Angeles County Sheriff has hit out at the Board of Supervisors and CEO for the 'County after they knocked back his budget.

Prepared before the Corona virus hit hard in the region this year's budget request for \$3.9billion was trimmed to \$3.5 billion, some \$400 million short of the requested amount.

The Sheriff has threatened that the only way to balance the books is to make cuts to a range of important services and the numbers employed. He stated specifically that the rescue and patrol helicopter services could be curtailed.

MARYLAND: Over Baltimore cloudy weather is forcing the recently launched six-month airborne surveillance user trial for Baltimore Police to fly at lower altitudes than expected, prompting a handful of complaints that it is too noisy.

It's part of a project to determine if the surveillance footage captured by the plane can assist police in solving serious crimes. At a cost of \$3.7M Persistent Surveillance Systems are supplying a Cessna aircraft

equipped with cameras that record every move in the area under surveillance. When the weather conditions allow the aircraft typically flies unheard and unseen at 9,500 feet but poor weather conditions and low cloud have forced it down to 3,000 feet. The increased noise has brought it to notice but so far, the number of complaints about the aircraft have been relatively low.

The aircraft flies from Martin State Airport and is privately funded by the philanthropists Laura and John Arnold through their organization, Arnold Ventures.

The Baltimore project was launched in 2016 with no public disclosure, and once discovered has attracted critics who say it infringes peoples' privacy. The American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland argued in a lawsuit that it infringes the right to privacy and free association under the First and Fourth amendments of the U.S. Constitution. A judge refused to block the operation.

The technology is not particularly new, but it is constantly developing and improving. Currently the underbelly camera system is capable of capturing images of over 30 square miles of a built-up area from a constantly circling aircraft. The company offers alternative daylight and night systems. There is little doubt that it works in daylight, but it is seen to be less effective in the dark. The Baltimore operation is daylight only and some critics have highlighted that the main criminal problems take place at night. [Baltimore Sun]

CONNECTICUT: Last year, at a time when they were celebrating their 50th anniversary, plans were put into place to bring air support to the 26,000 people of New Milford, a town in Litchfield County, Connecticut. The town is in western Connecticut, on the banks of the Housatonic River. It is the largest town in the state in terms of land area at nearly 62 square miles. The new Eagle Two is brought about by a tie up with the Nelson D'Ancona Foundation. The new helicopter expands the existing Eagle One programme, which is operated out of the Stratford Police Department and is one of the only all-volunteer helicopter operations in the state that helps with law enforcement and search and rescue operations throughout Connecticut and the surrounding areas for free. All services are free to the towns and individuals who need them.



©New Milford

The foundation uses private and corporate donations to maintain and operate the helicopter, as well as cover the insurance and fuel costs. There is no expense for New Milford, although it is considered a police department asset. Just as Eagle One has helped across the state, Eagle Two will also be used for emergencies in other towns. Calls for service will come through the New Milford Police Department through the mutual aid agreement.

The Nelson D’Ancona Foundation, was started in 1991 after two people died in the Connecticut River when no rescue resources were available. It has had and operated Eagle One, a Bell Huey, since 1993.

Last year the foundation was able to expand its operation to three helicopters through the 1033 Federal Program. New Milford was selected as the recipient of a Bell OH-58 Kiowa because of the department’s previous involvement and the geographical challenges of the area. The airframe was initially operated in its military green drab paint and equipped with the basic military avionics supplemented by an iPad.

In recent weeks the New Milford Police OH-58 has had a major makeover, externally a new paint scheme and a civil registration N95ND



Avionics Solutions’ paint shop team comes through on this gorgeous OH 58A! The helicopter is 49 years old. The many hours of prep work were exhausting but well worth the effort! Along with paint, the aircraft received a TON of equipment and mission capabilities. The old bird has a new lease on life and is well prepared to serve for years to come.

RDDS
MISSION CRITICAL



Control Panels



Mission Computers



HD Displays



Video Management

PROVEN HARDWARE. BESPOKE SOLUTIONS. DEPENDABLE SUPPORT.

RDDS Avionics is a leading OEM of hardware for the special mission environment. For over 25 years, we have built a deep understanding of the unique requirements of Police, Military, ISR and SAR Operators. The result is a highly regarded reputation for delivering innovative, quality COTS equipment and bespoke solutions with built-in reliability and outstanding support to demanding professional end users across the globe.

To find out more about our air cleared displays, VMUs, mission computers and how RDDS can support your team, contact us directly at sales@rdds.co.uk

AS9100 - EASA Part 21.G and 21.0 - EASA Part 145 - UK MOD DAOS Approved - FAA Repair Station



AIR AMBULANCE

©Ambulance Tasmania

AUSTRALIA

TASMANIA: A long-range, high-capacity helicopter has been added to Ambulance Tasmania's aeromedical fleet. The 2006 Bell 412 helicopter VH-XCI arrived in Hobart on April 20 from Queensland on April 20 and will be in the state for the next 12 months as the coronavirus pandemic continues to unfold.

The Bell enhances the existing, two helicopter and one fixed wing, service provided to the Department of Health in offering a helicopter capable of flying from Hobart to the North West Regional Hospital and back on a single tank of fuel.



The helicopter can be configured to transport two critical patients requiring ICU treatment simultaneously along with five crew members. It can land at all of the hospital helipads in the state and is faster than the two existing BK117 aeromedical helicopters.

CANADA

CHARITY AIR AMBULANCE: The country is vast, the population density low and, particularly in winter, the ease of communications poor. Running a public donation air ambulance service in the remoter areas of Canada means facing the same problems that beset places like Ireland, there simply are not enough donors to ensure the operation builds up enough financial reserves to take them through the bad times. The situation is always difficult – hand to mouth – but in the current situation those problems are magnified.

Western Canada does not attract the usual American air ambulance model, there are not enough people to carry and not enough to pay the subscriptions. So, a form of charity air ambulance sponsored by local government and industry prevails. In places like the United Kingdom an operation is doing badly if its fund-raising shops are shut and fund-raising events are curtailed but there is still enough impetus in the company donations and legacy element to bring in the money to pay the CEO.

ALBERTA: STARS, the Grand Prairie based charitable, non-profit organisation funded by individuals, organizations, businesses, event partners and governments for more than 30 years the air operation lost its normal fundraising streams to COVID-19. The multiple helicopter has faced up to the changed situation by greater reliance on their annual STARS Lottery Saskatchewan, offering ticket purchasers the opportunity to win life-changing prizes while also helping in the fight to save lives.

The lottery is STARS largest fundraiser in Saskatchewan. The ninth edition offers more than 1,800 prizes, valued at over \$4.2M, and includes luxury vehicles, holidays, cash, electronics, appliances and two stunning, fully-furnished show homes worth more than \$1.5M each – both of which are awarded in the final draw. Normally the sales pitch associated with the publicity for the draws gives the public the opportunity to view the grand prize show homes but not this year. The draw ticket deadlines fall in the next two months, early bird ticket sales have a deadline of June 25 and the final ticket sales deadline of July 16.

Another potentially more high-profile event recently formulated is Streaming for STARS a big names Country and Western event attracting at least seventeen of Canada's biggest names to an on-line appearance that it is hoped will raise \$100,000. Kim Kroll-Goodwin the STARS Foundation Events Manager is getting high profile backing for the media but it will be some time before they know whether the two fundraisers will bring in enough to pay for the ongoing fleet upgrade to multiple H145 helicopters.

ALBERTA: Further south it would appear that the situation is somewhat worse for the HALO Air Ambulance. They have been struggling for a long time even before the Coronavirus appeared. They have recently sent an urgent letter to the province, saying that without an investment from the government, the medevac program won't survive through the summer.

Operating out of Medicine Hat, the service has completed about 750 missions since it was established in 2007., that is around one operation a week, but it is across some of the bleakest difficult to traverse topography in the world.

As chronicled in the October 2019 edition of PAN HALO have appealed before to the provincial government for help resuscitate the charity funded air ambulance. Like the UK air ambulances it is reliant upon public and private donations to sustain its activities but is only able to fundraise locally among a population of some 60,000 in the vicinity of Medicine Hat, the wider area of southern Alberta it serves is vast and remote with a population of just 272,000.

Somehow or another the late 2019 statement that HALO was about to collapse last year did not come to pass and the operation still flies its 1988 MBB (Eurocopter) BK117B2 C-GRLH with a Bell 206L LongRanger as back-up. Time will tell whether the dire warnings come to pass this time.

HALO has asked the province to fully fund its current budget, which is roughly \$3M a year, or \$250,000 a month. They say that if it does not receive an immediate investment from the province HALO will be forced to scale back operations to a single-engine helicopter effective June 1, 2020, will then provide limited medevac operations with a single-engine helicopter for a period of 30 days until all operations cease on July 1. Later in the month it was reported that the province was refusing cash assistance.

A more positive story is that, after years of planning, the City of Melfort is taking the next step towards building a heliport at the Melfort hospital. The hospital, which serves a referral population of over 12,000 people, currently relies on ground EMS and the Melfort airport for patient transfers. The move will make access to the site easier for the STARS helicopters – currently they land in Melfort around 25 times each year.



Manufacturers and Integrators of Mission Computers, DVRs, RGB Converters and Video Downlinks.

Maximise Mission Success



CAMC Mission Computer

- i7 Quad processor with built in ethernet switch
- 2/4 video channel versions with optional LITE version networked for pilot moving map display
- 3 display outputs
- DO 160 Qualified when 'fully loaded'. Normally runs at 50% capacity even when in MTI mode
- Class leading high quality low latency built in video encoders
- Interfaces to all major turret manufacturers products
- Interfaces for all mission equipment including digital downlinks
- Removeable SSD for confidential mapping or recording. Embedded OS.

Britannia 2000 Holdings Ltd - 4 Millside Park - Crouch Lane - Winkfield - Berkshire SL4 4PX - UK
sales@b2kholdings.co.uk Tel: +44 (0) 1344 885058 Mob: +44 (0) 7717 292751

The municipal health advocacy committee is nearing the completion of their capital campaign to raise \$600,000 for the heliport and tenders are about to be issued.

IRELAND

ICRR: A constant stream of donations and virtual fundraisers for the service has enabled a return to a 7-day operation from June 1. The Air Ambulance had operated a 5-day only service due to cost saving measures put in place earlier this year, after the unprecedented amount of missions and COVID-19 put financial pressure on the service.

PHILIPPINES

MANILA: Different nations have been dealing with the COVID-19 issues in different timescales. Lock-down has so many different meanings, with some nations never closing their doors at all and some slamming the doors shut only to find that they could not take the isolation and survive.

Many nations had gone through the process in March and April and yet the government in the Philippines waiting until early May before they decided to temporarily hold off all commercial flights to and from the country. Initially for one week.

The decision was made to mitigate the spread of the virus and free up space in quarantine facilities where thousands of repatriated overseas Filipino Overseas Foreign Workers (OFW) were undergoing mandatory isolation. Around 20,000 OFWs were being housed in quarantine facilities in Metro Manila before they are allowed to go back to their place of origin. More than 1,700 OFWs have so far been infected with COVID-19 at the time of the close down.

After the closure the only flight operations allowed at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila and all other international airports in the country were for aircraft declaring in flight emergencies; cargo flights;

SummitAviation

ISR Expertise
from start to finish

We understand the work you do is important. Our team of professionals partners with government organizations such as federal, state and local law enforcement, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Government Non-DoD, Special Missions and International Military to equip and maintain ISR mission aircraft.

Summit Aviation in Delaware is a one-stop-shop for your eye in the sky.



Matt Tarczynski
717.557.5602

air ambulance and medical supplies flights; weather mitigation flights; and maintenance flights.

The government were also allowing retrieval flights for foreign nationals returning to their countries of origin. Any such scheduled flight required an exemption with the CAAP Operations Center at least 36 hours before departure from their place of origin.

RUSSIA

AIR MEDICAL SERVICES: Russian Helicopters have obtained approval from the Federal Air Transport Agency (Rosaviatsiya) for installing isolation units in Ansat multipurpose helicopters to transport patients with COVID-19. The modules will be installed on helicopters in their medical version.

Some thirty Ansat helicopters have been supplied to regions for air medical services. To improve their performance during the pandemic, the manufacturers have instigated a certification process that does not require modification of the aircraft. No images or details of the module or its source have been made public.

UNITED KINGDOM

NATIONAL: As mentioned in last month’s edition on the last day of April the first flights being made under the Helicopter Assistance to Civil Authorities (HACA) scheme set up by the British Helicopter Association, commenced. Two AW109s were flown from the NHS Nightingale Hospital at the ExCel Centre in London to its sister NHS Nightingale Hospital in Sunderland.

The aircraft operated by Arena Aviation and Atlas Helicopters, were involved the transportation of six people.

BABCOCK: Emergency response teams on the front lines in Spain and Italy are helping UK air ambulances develop new ways of boosting safety and on-board patient care in the fight against COVID-19.

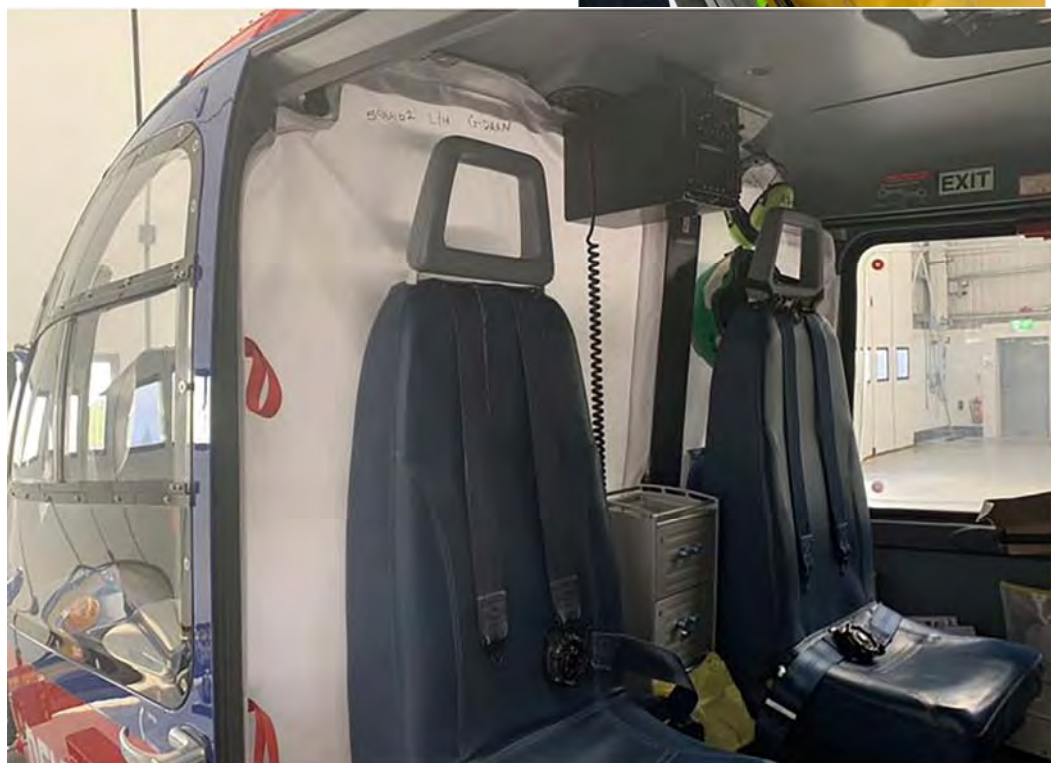
Babcock operate a fleet of over 20 charity-funded air ambulances across Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales and they have unveiled new technologies to help protect the health and wellbeing of air ambulance teams.

By drawing on the experience and innovation of Babcock air ambulance experts in Spain, Italy and France, the company created a new framework system, allowing UK H145 air ambulances to fly with specialist patient isolation pods. The system allows isolation pods to work seamlessly with the on-board medical systems, giving emergency teams a new level of confidence and allowing first-class on-board patient care. Babcock teams working with similar systems in Italy, Spain, and France, have been sharing experience and knowledge gained during their own fight against the virus.



At the same time Babcock engineers across the UK and Spain, including Babcock Marine in Plymouth and Babcock Mission Critical Services in Staverton, have collaborated to design and develop a new on-board barrier which effectively separates the medical teams from the flight crews on all their international fleet of air ambulance helicopters. Manufactured in Spain, this critical new safety measure provides a new level of protection for teams on-board the lifesaving aircraft. The system is fully approved for use on EC135, H145 and AW109 air ambulance helicopters.

The new barrier [Babcock]



TAAS: The Air Ambulance Service charity, has made a plea to the public to back an urgent appeal to safely reopen its stores which provide the much-needed income to operate its clinical services free at the point of delivery.

The charity is in the process of transforming a network of 57 shops and boutiques to ensure the safety of customers and staff as soon as the charity is given the greenlight to open. They are seeking just £22,000 to undertake the task.

The charity is facing a bill of nearly £13,000 for hygiene screens around till points, over £7,000 for hand sanitizer stations and fluids as well over £1,000 for social distancing signage and measures. The bill to reopen the charity shops is in addition to the losses faced by the charity due to the pandemic. They expect to have a shortfall of at least £2.18M a quarter (April to June).

Editor: As the researcher of this item [Jeremy Parkin of Helihub] noted these sums are not excessive compared with other struggling good causes. In the accounts for the year to 31 December 2018 the balance sheet showed they had £11.778M in the bank. TAAS two AW109s from Coventry and East Midlands Airports and has two replacements on order and it also has two AW169s operating as the Children's Air Ambulance.

TAAS were not the only ones to face criticism about penny pinching fundraising. Thames Valley who appear to still have over £6M in reserves were also outed by Helihub. Worse they masked the critical comment!

Pretty much all of the charities have been wailing about the cost of meeting their PPE sanitation needs in these troubled times. Some, like Yorkshire AA <https://youtu.be/EsnSDO2QL6Q> were subtle in their reminders to past supporters but most were not and with their blatant 'gimme gimme gimme' mantra stood a good chance of alienating their supporters. The majority sought a few thousand pounds and yet most, if not all, sit on a few million pounds in reserves. Most have plans to spend those reserves before they become so large as to be an issue with the Charity Commission and the fundraising public.



CRIMINALS BEWARE. YOU HAVE MET YOUR MATCH.

Airborne law enforcement missions have evolved. So have our EO/IR imaging sensors.

Threats are evolving. Missions are longer, more complex and need to be executed faster. More is expected of you and your crew each and every time you fly. L3Harris' technology is evolving to meet these threats. Delivering robust performance and ease-of-use, these newly launched mission-critical technologies within WESCAM MX™ airborne sensor systems enables operators to see more, operate easier and analyze with confidence. Evolving threats around the world have met their match.



There are no stories around that the CEO of any UK Charity air ambulance, is about to take a pay cut. Some sections of the UK charity air ambulance fraternity might be accused of over egging their activities during the Coronavirus. In times when their donors may have their own jobs on the line, it was probably time to be quiet and eat into the reserves.

CIVIL AIR PATROL: Their offers of voluntary assistance may not be popular with senior police officers, but the volunteer organisation continues to successfully move forward its focus on assisting those involved in the fight against the effects of the COVID-19 virus. This is in addition to the efforts, mentioned last month, of the military and air ambulance fraternity.

Last month PAN reported on a speedy parts delivery mission using light aircraft and marketed as their 'Pony Express' service. That continues.

Later in April a similar mission was undertaken for the National Health Service (NHS) in the Western Isles off Scotland. The Western Isles or Outer Hebrides are situated on the extreme North West of Scotland. The Isle of Lewis is the most northern of the Western Isles, Barra and Vatersay are the most southerly. Two ferries and numerous causeways joint the islands together but transport to the UK mainland is time consuming.

The mission was to transport coronavirus test consumables to Barra, Benbecula and Stornoway in Outer Hebrides. This idea, to approach the NHS direct, both in England & Wales and in Scotland, actually originated in England and has then passed on, to colleagues in Scotland, after NHS Scotland came back with a positive response.

The flight, which was undertaken on April 28 by a 1978 twin engine Gulfstream American GA-7 aircraft, G-GOTC, with an experienced pilot, involved the distribution of test consumables between Stornoway, Benbecula and Barra. It had been requested on Monday by liaison planners currently based in Stornoway as a test of CAP capability and response times, with a view to more widespread UKCAP airborne support in the coming weeks.



The UK Civil Air Patrol Gulfstream GA-7, G-GOTC, on the landing ground at North Bay, also called Cockle Strand, on the island of Barra in the Outer Hebrides.

UKCAP national Chairman and Chief Pilot Archie Liggat said: "This week's operation was a very straightforward flight for this aircraft. It follows a significant amount of planning in the background between the UK Civil Air Patrol nationally, local resilience forums and NHS planning teams.

"This flight once again highlights the UKCAP's ability to augment our established public services in times of crisis and to undertake essential operations quickly, safely, effectively and at no cost to the public purse. This is only possible because our crews donate their aircraft and time for free.

"We are now discussing what additional support may be required by NHS Western Isles on an on-going basis and refining our plans to support this. These include the UKCAP potentially basing aircraft in Stornoway on a rotational basis to deliver support as required.

"It's important to note that all UKCAP flying activity involves a high degree of preparation and planning, with all crews and aircraft appropriately certified and insured. This is especially true of our current very limited operations in reflection of the national lockdown. As a result of this, today's operation was also specifically agreed in advance with the Civil Aviation Authority and involved additional safety measures."

NHS Western Isles Chief Executive Gordon Jamieson said: "As we face the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19, we have had to rapidly develop and implement new ways of working. UKCAP is another fine example of one of the many organisations and individuals stepping forward to assist us in managing and defeating this virus. We have a long way to go and will face new challenges along the way. It is reassuring to know we have the support and input from UKCAP. I thank them on behalf of our communities in the Western Isles."

This first NHS 'pony express' essential supplies delivery flight took place on 28 April 2020 to Barra, Benbecula and Stornoway. A further flight, to Benbecula and Stornoway, took place on May 3, using a Cessna 210 Centurion. The mission in the GA-7 used an aircraft normally based nearly 180 miles away on the east coast of Scotland near Dundee.

In a further development on May 18 there was a linkup between three charities, the CAP and two chapters of Blood Bikes and it appears to be something of a first. An urgent sample was transported from a laboratory in Salisbury, Wiltshire to Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge. The majority of the journey was by air, thanks to the CAP offering their services for free. After being contacted by *SERV Wessex – The Blood Runners* the flight from Thruxton in Piper PA28 Cherokee Arrow G-AYII was met at Duxford by Operations Manager Mick and he took the sample the final eight miles to Addenbrooke's.



The request came from The Dorset County Hospital asking for bikes to get a time sensitive genetics sample from Salisbury to Addenbrookes. Normally this would be done via a relay across country using other Blood bike groups, but it fitted in with earlier discussions on using aircraft for long distance transfers to cut the times of the conventional deliveries.

As this run was requested for a specific day they both had enough time to organise riders from both groups to collect and deliver the sample to the airfield and then one the other end to take it from the aircraft to Addenbrookes. As well as finding a plane, pilot and somewhere to take off & land!

The plan ran like clockwork. Robert Smith SW picked up the sample 09.30 & handed to Nigel Wilson of the CAP at Thruxton at 10.05. Takeoff was @10.15 and he then landed at Duxford 11.00 and passed the sample on to biker Mick Thurman who completed the run into Addenbrookes Genetic Lab. The hand-over was at 11.25am, five minutes under the two hours. By road this would have been 140 miles and with the timing of the handovers for each stage it is believed it would have taken at least three hours by bike alone.

The Blood Bikes sortie was not a massive illustration of the possibilities as the distances were modest and

over and area covered by good roads but a further instance of CAP transfer illustrates the point more clearly and builds on the success the NHS 'pony express', rapid courier service for the delivery of COVID-19 related medical supplies. As with the Western Isles flights the CAP operating an over water 'air bridge' from the UK mainland makes for greater impact.

A Civil Air Patrol pilot, Jamie Lenox flew his Piper Turbo Arrow aircraft from Lee-on-Solent, near Gosport in Hampshire to Ronaldsway Airport on the Isle of Man [in the Irish Sea] on May 19 delivering 300 face shields for people working in pharmacies and optometrists. Although the Manx government has sufficient personal protective equipment for hospitals and care homes, there was insufficient for all front-line key workers. The face shields were purchased by the Wilton Group based in Douglas, the islands capital city in cooperation with a London based group 'Operation Nightingale'.

The Isle of Man Health Minister, David Ashford welcomed the sortie, *"This partnership is a good example of organisations working together to support the health and wellbeing of health professionals who are committed to providing the very best care for their patients."*

Even with perfect timing, the surface journey by car and ship out to the island would take at least 10 hours, even without Covid-19 there are no direct commercial flights but the CAP flight of around 260 miles took around under two hours.

Ed: The purpose of the UKCAP, a registered charity, is to provide occasional airborne support to first responders, agencies, groups or individuals who would otherwise not have access to such a facility or who may need to temporarily extend the reach of their own established capability. The role is strictly humanitarian and voluntary.

The UKCAP has aircraft, pilots and observers based all over the country operating from permanent airfields and farm strips. This ensures maximum flexibility and reduces transit time by air to the scene of assistance. The organisation also has an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) capability.

And yet others appear to wish to barge in on this niche public service traffic. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is said to be ready to create "air corridors" where drone flying rules are relaxed to deliver goods during the coronavirus pandemic and beyond.

In a 23-page plan, the CAA says it will lift the ban on drones flying out of the sight line of their operators in designated "zones" provided the operators show they can meet safety standards. The ultimate is the need for 'sense and avoid' technology but it is being suggested that this might be set aside for limited flights across to the Western Isles.

One project flying medical supplies into the Isle of Wight has already been approved while another to deliver medical equipment, testing packs and pathological samples to remote islands and communities in West Scotland - the very area the CAP is serving with a single pilot – is the proposal.

The drone plan requires at least two pilots – one on the mainland to launch the craft over the remote stretch of water and another to receive it in each of the several islands. The CAP plan of course uses one aircraft and a self-isolating pilot for as long as it is needed where the drone plan requires a pilot and equipment on each receiver island to get in place ready to receive the drone. The difference in load carrying capability is also massive. Drone companies say their project is a "catalyst" to accelerate the use of the unmanned craft. Others may disagree.

The still to be operated project in the Isle of Wight is also medically orientated. The University of Southampton will be taking part in the trial using drones to transport medical supplies across the Solent to support the response to the COVID19 pandemic.



The trial is the first of its kind and aims to benefit patients on the Isle of Wight by speeding up the delivery of medical supplies.

Funded by the Department for Transport, the Solent Transport Future Transport Zone (FTZ) project will use a UAV drone designed and built by the University. Originally a four-year drone project it is being brought forward to serve the Pandemic, with trials commencing in mid-May. Tellingly though it still requires to be in sight of the operators or a valid 'sense and avoid' to operate in the crowded Solent area - and that simply is not yet available.

Initially the project will involve a Windracers ULTRA UAV drone flying between the Isle of Wight and the mainland and will provide an additional way for supplies to reach the island. The petrol-fuelled drone will fly from Solent Airport (Lee-on-Solent) to Binstead Airfield, a journey of just 10 minutes. The payload will then be transported the short journey to St Mary's Hospital by road.



The drone is a large, double engine, fix winged device with a carrying capacity of up to 100kg in a space around the size a car boot. In the initial operation it will be carrying loads of not more than 40kg and the type of cargo will depend on the needs of the hospital and subject to permissions granted by the CAA. This is a fraction of the potential load carrying ability of any of the CAP aircraft – if weight were an issue. This drone is a big beast though, the auw is well over 700 pounds, it needs a conventional runway and if it were to malfunction it will represent a major problem.

Ed: The distance from the mainland to the Isle of Wight is tiny and regularly linked by a conventional car ferry or hovercraft. It may be a suitable site for experimentation with the drone concept, but other entrepreneurs are simply driving the real clinical needs across using the scheduled ferry door to door or sailing them across from beach to beach in boats of all kinds.

DEVON: The charity grounded its aircraft on crew safety grounds early in the COVID-19 crisis and relied upon its two critical care cars to provide a medical service.

Although several in the charity funding industry were worried that air ambulances in general would lose out in fund-raising Devon has found that businesses and organisations have been united in the fight to defeat the invisible enemy. Cross collaboration is better than ever as companies work together to support each other.

The Devon Air Ambulance Trust (DAAT) say they have been humbled by the generosity and support of companies and fellow air ambulances not only in Devon but as far as Tamworth in Staffordshire and Kent, Surrey & Sussex who have shown tremendous generosity.

Kastners, the local Volvo dealer based near the unit in Exeter offered to loan an additional Volvo XC60 vehicle to supplement the two critical care cars that were taking on the full response tasking. This gener-



CRITICAL VISION TECHNOLOGY

To see, to save and protect

TOTAL SOLUTIONS PACKAGE





TrakkaCam® TC-300

High performance cost-effective surveillance system, 4-axis gyrostabilised, available with a full suite of 7 payload options (HDIR, HDTV, LRF, LP, LI, A/T, IMU/GPS). Lightweight/compact single LRU design, ITAR-free



TrakkaMaps® TM-100

Mapping & Recording Video Management System, Multi map views with augmented reality, Integration with open and proprietary user databases, Intuitive control and innovative post-processing



TrakkaBeam® TLX

High performance searchlight with superior beam quality, Lower power draw, Internal multispectral filters, optional new dual EO/IR sensors for full situational awareness

trakkasystems.com

ous offer enables the DAAT to attend more life-saving missions if necessary but also means that they can call upon an additional vehicle which may be closer to the incident. It will carry the same equipment on board as the existing vehicles, has blue light rapid response capability and will carry the same red, blue & bright yellow colours that feature on the existing vehicles. Furthermore, the Kep Print Group, based in Tamworth in Staffordshire, have supplied magnetic signage to match the other vehicles free of charge.

During the period of grounding both of the aircraft were flown to Staverton for the fitting of a new on-board barrier to separate the medical teams from the flight crews. The aircraft are supported by Airbus, but the additional guard is a Babcock item [see earlier item page 14].

No charity can find it economic to employ or contract pilots and not use them, so early in May Devon Air Ambulance resumed air operations after the successful introduction of the cabin screens. The Trust now see the aircraft can now provide an acceptable level of protection for both patients and aircrew against inadvertent interface with the Coronavirus.

In addition to the screens, aircrew will also now be able to use newly designed throat microphones when they need to wear Level 3 PPE respirator masks in-flight which will improve internal and external communication. Lastly, a new bracket has been designed which will enable a full-face visor to be worn on the aviation safety helmets. This will provide the ability for clinicians to wear the required Level 3 PPE when carrying out medical procedures which carry a greater risk of transmitting Coronavirus.

The work undertaken on the Devon AAT aircraft called upon the expertise of Babcock Marine at Devonport Dockyard, Babcock Mission Critical Services Onshore in Staverton Gloucester but additionally drew upon the work of Headset Services Limited for the helmet modification.

From May 6 the Exeter-based aircraft have been taking to the skies over Devon responding to patients from 7am to dusk every day. As a first step, they will be deploying to patients by air, treating them on scene and then assisting local crews to convey patients to hospital by land ambulance. The Critical Care car will remain operational throughout the day in addition to the aircraft and then at dusk undertake to take the service through to 0200 daily.

For the time being, the aircraft based at the northern site at Eaglescott will primarily be assigned to training and simulation. [DAAT]

ESSEX & HERTS

After a short break due to the COVID-19 work has restarted on the multi-million pound base for the Essex & Herts Charity Air Ambulance at North Weald. [image from the NW Airfield web site]



DORSET & SOMERSET: Following new guidance, issued by Public Health England (PHE) in mid-May, Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance became fully prepared and available to treat and convey patients by air, including those with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 illness.

Previous guidance specifically excluded the carriage of known or suspected COVID-19 patients in air ambulances across England. After working intensively with Public Health England, Specialist Aviation Services (and through them, the Civil Aviation Authority) and the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust on developing new guidance in relation to all air ambulances being able to convey sus-

pected or confirmed COVID-19 patients.

Prior to the changes the critical care team remained operational for 19 hours a day, and have been transporting patients without symptoms of COVID-19 by air where necessary. However, those suspected or confirmed COVID-19 sufferers have been conveyed to hospital by road.

Cockpit and cabin separation has been achieved via a certified flight deck isolation barrier and air flow separation. [DSAA]

LINCS & NOTTS: Last month as the various air ambulances took stock of the growing threat of the COVID-19 to their staffing levels, safety and funding they modified their mission profiles. The Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance announced that their plans to halt development of night flying.

Since then the situation has apparently eased and now Lincs & Notts are to again undertake some flights during the night from May 1.

The charity had warned it faced as much as a £3M shortfall in funding this year and that staff were being diverted to bolster the medical teams fighting the Coronavirus or were off watch self-isolating. By the first week in May they found that more crew members including doctors were able to fulfil some shifts, so the service was unexpectedly planning on providing around 30% of its usual cover in May.

The air ambulance had already launched a fundraising appeal to offset the loss of income due the virus which has led to closing the shops and cancelling vital fundraising activities which, over the spring and summer months, provide a significant boost to income. Although those income streams remain unavailable local people have donated to LNAA via other means to make up a significant amount of the shortfall.

SCOTLAND: The new Dyce-based team of Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA) have had a quieter than expected introduction to service. With fewer people working and getting out and about due to lockdown call outs have been relatively low.

WILTSHIRE: Some operations hide their past in case it comes back to haunt them, others revel in their past and actively build upon it. Wiltshire is proud of its past as a joint police and air ambulance unit – not something the modern police aviation organisation embraces.



©Wiltshire AA

To that end the modern and independent Wiltshire Air Ambulance charity has been contacting people involved in its past and has actively promoted its present through telling their stories. A few weeks ago, it was the past pilots, more recently it has been past police officers who have been throwing the limelight on the operation.

A former police inspector who was part of the pioneering crew that helped pave the way for the development of Wiltshire Air Ambulance has been sharing his memories. Brian Murdoch [right], who lives in Bishopstone, was involved in setting up the Air Support Unit (ASU) and was in charge of it when it began operating full-time from 1990. He worked there until 1993.



Wiltshire Air Ambulance, which celebrates its 30th anniversary, shared a helicopter with Wiltshire Police from March 15, 1990 to December 31, 2014. It was not until January 2015, that Wiltshire Air Ambulance became a stand-alone air ambulance using a Bell 429 helicopter and in May 2018 the charity moved into its purpose-built airbase in Semington.

UNITED STATES

NATIONAL: In a massive contrast to the situation found in other countries it seems that across the USA thousands of healthcare workers are being laid off or furloughed amid COVID-19 pandemic.

Healthcare workers, championed for risking their lives to protect others during the coronavirus crisis, are being hit especially hard by the economic fallout from the pandemic. In California, thousands of doctors, nurses and other medical staff have been laid off, furloughed or taken pay cuts since mid-March. Nationally, job losses in the healthcare sector have been second only to those in the restaurant industry, according to federal statistics.

It is not just California. Over in Florida, one of God's waiting rooms, some hospitals are half empty and some have only seen one COVID-19 patient in their ICU. All of the elective surgery patients or people who really didn't need to be there in the first place are avoiding the hospital, or not allowed to go, so they have a low number of customers. Even staff that are 'working' were not their full time until management laid off all of the part time staff or contract nurses.

ALASKA: North Slope Borough Search and Rescue now flies a Pilatus PC-24 air ambulance. In the northernmost territory on the United States the PC-24 provides basic medical care at jet speeds for 9,800 residents across a territory of 95,000 square miles (246,000 square kilometres). The operation is run by the municipal government to provide aeromedical evacuation, and SAR to all North Slope Borough residents.



The new airframe, N827HB, is fitted with tandem LifePort™ AeroSled™ stretchers and five passenger seats, it is the fourth PC-24 to be delivered in a medevac configuration. It is to be based in the town of Barrow, Alaska, also known as Utqiagvik, is located at 71 degrees north latitude. The average temperature in mid-January is -14 degrees Fahrenheit (-26 degrees Celsius) and the sun does not rise completely above the horizon until early February. This region.

In addition to the PC-24, which replaces an older Lear Jet 31 N789SR light jet, SAR currently operates two helicopters, including a Sikorsky S-92 and Bell 412, and a fixed wing Beech King Air 350 turboprop aircraft. All are capable of day, night, visual or instrument meteorological flight conditions in a medevac context. Many flights are operated from snow and ice packed runways with paved, dirt, and gravel surfaces – conditions for which the PC-24 was specifically designed.

In another move it has been announced that COVID-19 has had a severe effect on day-to-day flights in the region and as a result one local operator, RavnAir, has withdrawn its services. In its place Ryan Air, previously operating just cargo services in the region, with a PC-12, will now fly mail, freight and "essential passengers," to the North Slope Borough. There has been a huge loss in passenger bookings.

FIRE

COLUMBIA

NATIONAL POLICE: Since Thursday, April 24th, 2020, two AT-802 fire fighting and crop spraying aircraft from the Colombian National Police managed by the UNGRD have been fighting forest fires occurring in the rural area of Valledupar dropping more than 12,700 gallons of water and retardant.

Multiple other agencies including Fire, Civil Defence, and the Municipal Risk Management Council worked to bring the fire under control in a week. Months of drought in the region, together with the strong winds, have contributed to the start of forest fires, several of which have been in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta area, which due to the sloping topography caused difficulty in controlling the fire without aerial support.

The two AT-802 tankers are under the command of Columbia's Anti-Narcotics Directorate Air Service but configured for aerial firefighting capable of dropping 800 gallon loads.

Clearly the AT-802 aircraft have another tasking in the anti-narcotics arena and that includes operations that may be under threat – the aerial spraying of glyphosate to destroy drug crops in Colombia.

Glyphosate has been labelled 'probably carcinogenic' by the World Health Organisation (WHO) despite it being key to coca eradication efforts for 20 years. All that time crop dusters have zig zagged the skies of Colombia showering bright green fields of coca with chemical defoliant as part of a US-funded effort to stem the country's production of cocaine.



Their activities have been destroying legal crops, and – allegedly caused a range of medical issues for those unlucky to be under the spray. Locals blame it for minor skin rashes and respiratory problems to problematic diarrhoea and miscarriages. The complaints against glyphosate have been ignored by the authorities in Colombia and by the major funder of the activity the United States. The Americans have allegedly pumped two billion dollars into the eradication programme in 20 years. The governments simply say that aerial spraying is the most effective and safest method of destroying coca plants. Since 1994 Colombia has sprayed more than 4 million acres.

After the WHO cancer research arm found that glyphosate, known in the USA as 'Round Up' and subject to queries there, is "probably carcinogenic", Colombia has recently suggested that its use should cease. A decision on the recommendation is expected to be made at a meeting on 14 May of the National Narcotics Council, the body which sets Colombia's drug policy.

Despite the defoliation attacks on the Coca crops in Colombia, US figures suggest that the work has been a failure. There has been a sharp rise in coca cultivation last year after six straight years of steady or dropping production. The land under coca cultivation in 2014 was up 39% to 112,000 hectares. Production jumped 32% to 245 tonnes. [Columbian Security Forces/The Guardian]

Copyright Notice: The content of this publication includes items that are the copyright of others. Where the information is available the source of words and images will usually be indicated together with the source of additional information that seeks to enhance the original information.

Police Aviation News includes materials produced for it by Ian J Commin of Insight Design of North Burnham, Slough SL1 6DS. This includes the banner titles and the PAVCon logo. In addition from time to times images specifically altered by Insight Design and others but originally produced for McAlpine Helicopters [now Airbus Helicopters UK], Oxford, will appear with permission of the original owner. In some cases it may not be possible to indicate the source of this material directly associated with the images used, or such information may have been lost. Such images may be marked 'File' or 'PAR Collection'.



GERMANY

©Polizei NRW

NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA: The Ministry of the Interior of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia in Düsseldorf have announced a cooperative operation between the police and the fire departments.

On May 12 the squadron of the NRW police presented their new Bambi Buckets intended to be used to extinguish forest fires using a long line method. NRW Minister Herbert Reul claims that the new equipment places them as the best-equipped police force in this field.

The Bambi equipment was purchased last year at a cost of some €880,000 including pilot training. The Bambi Buckets were used for the first time on April 20 in a forest fire near Gummersbach, so the unit is still new to the techniques involved.

For this year NRW is assuming that its heath, moor, field and forest lands will be more at risk – this year has been warm and dry so far and may be the third exceptionally dry year in a row. They have planned an additional “forest fire module” for each of the 24 fire services, ten water delivery systems for around €11M and 109 new fire engines for civil protection for around €35M. They see it as all about climate change increasing the risk.

The NRW squadron (radio call Hummel) flies an average of around 2,000 missions per year, based at Düsseldorf and Dortmund airports. Since 2017, the entire helicopter fleet has been exchanged for six new Airbus H 145 aircraft for around €65M. The crew of a helicopter consists of two pilots and an operator/TFO who, in the case of the fire fighting role, stands outside the cabin and directs the pilots whilst remotely operating the water release from the "Bambi Bucket." ^[NRW]

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: In 2015 the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District began a partnership with the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office to provide an increased level of service for the Sheriff's Air Support Unit (ASU), using their two helicopters, STARR 1 & STARR 3. This partnership has provided an enhanced capability of their helicopters, while providing a broadened scope of service throughout Contra Costa County – situated on the east side of San Francisco Bay with an area of 1,850 sq. km and a population of 1,049,025.

Until 2019, the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District reached hard-to-access areas through a cooperative flight programme with the sheriff's office. The county helicopter had a limited number of days and hours of availability because the sheriff's office had to balance the needs of its primary law enforcement mission. With California wildfires increasing in frequency and intensity, the Contra Costa County Fire Pro-



©CC County

tection District has added a second staffed helicopter to beef up its emergency rescue and firefighting capability.

The second chopper, put into service without fanfare in March, was acquired through a partnership with REACH Air Medical Services, a company providing medical air transport in many parts of the western United States.

The operation now has an Airbus Helicopters H145 N324RX and an Airbus Helicopters EC145 N390FD. The sheriff's unit still operate the Bell 407GX on law enforcement duties.

SEARCH & RESCUE

ISRAEL

ELBIT SYSTEMS: The company have introduced a unique life saving capability to its Hermes 900 Maritime Patrol Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS). Integrating detection and identification capabilities, onboard inflated life-rafts, and precision dispatch capability, enables the UAS to perform long-range maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) missions. Such a configured Hermes 900 Maritime Patrol UAS was recently delivered to an undisclosed customer in South-East Asia.



©Elbit Systems

Adverse weather conditions and short endurance significantly degrade the SAR capabilities of manned aircraft, often preventing them from executing their missions. Capable of more than 24 hours of continuous flight, the Hermes 900 Maritime Patrol can operate in adverse weather conditions in both day and night. The UAS can increase the number of missions that can be safely executed and improve the safety and effectiveness of maritime response.

#

The Hermes 900 Maritime Patrol can carry up to four, six-person life-rafts on its wings. Using an onboard radar the UAS detects survivors, adds input from a EO/IR and calculates the drop-point. The drop of the rafts is generally performed from a low-altitude of 600ft to a location at a safe distance from the survivors.

KYRGYZSTAN

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS: Early in May the Minister of Emergency Situations Zamirbek Askarov reported to parliament that Ministry had one helicopter, but it is not airworthy.

Kyrgyzstan officially the Kyrgyz Republic, is a country in Central Asia. with a population of just over 5 million. Fifteen years ago the US. government donated two Mi-8MTV helicopters. One of the pair was damaged in an accident in 2005.

RUSSIA

EMERCOM: Russian Helicopters have supplied the first Ansat helicopter for use by the Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM) in Russia. The rotorcraft was handed over to the Fund supporting the development of state authorities in civil defence, emergencies and elimination of consequences of natural disasters (the Fund). The helicopter has already been handed over to the North-Western Aviation and Rescue Centre of EMERCOM of Russia and is located on Kasimovo Airfield.



Kazan Helicopters and the Fund signed the contract for supply in March 2019. The Ansat was handed over to the customer in a universal version; the cabin has fittings for installing a medical module but is set for seven passenger seats. It will be used for transporting staff, cargo and equipment in the cabin or on an external sling, and special missions.

In late 2019, two Mi-8MTV-1 helicopters made by Kazan Helicopters were also handed over to EMERCOM. Under the contract with the Fund, one of the helicopters is equipped with an external sling, which allows transporting large cargo weighing up to four tonnes. The second Mi-8MTV-1 helicopter is to be handed over to the Zhukovsky Aviation and Rescue Center.

In March, in the suburbs of Khabarovsk, the Ministry of Emergency Situations held a parachute training session. With the participation of rescuers Far Eastern Regional Search and Rescue Unit, Khabarovsk Air Rescue Centre (ARC), Amur spas centre and Specialized Fire and Rescue Unit (SPSC) of Federal Rescue Service in the Khabarovsk Region. In the course of training rescuers, firefighters and pilots of EMERCOM of Russia practice skills of non-parachute landing of helicopter Mi-8 using trigger roller device and jump with parachute from a height of 3 thousand metres.

Annually scheduled training sessions are held to train beginners, improve the skills of experienced rescuers and obtain permits for those who are engaged in organizing and conducting descents, parachute jumps.

These skills read across to SAR operations carried out in remote and impassable corners of the Far East, as well as over dangerous areas of water, ice, and hard-to-reach areas. In order to be ready to respond to various emergencies, rescuers work out all possible scenarios, improve their professional level, and get permits to perform certain types of jumps and descents within the framework of training camps.

Based on the main tasks of landing training, skydiving is performed from a height of 1000 to 3000 meters, non - parachute landing from a helicopter on snow, forest, a limited area (the roof of the tower) - from 10 to 30 meters.

At the same time with the rescuers, the aviators of the EMERCOM of Russia are honing their skills and abilities. Performing a landing while hovering over the ground is not an easy task, it requires a clear understanding and coordination of actions of both the aircraft crew and rescuers.

UNITED KINGDOM

UK COASTGUARD: The UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency has a fleet of aircraft that's larger, with bigger aircraft, both helicopters and fixed wing, than NPAS.

Subject to day-to-day maintenance availability, the police agency has fifteen Airbus Helicopters EC135T2 and P2, four EC145, and four P68R fixed wing. A total of 24 aircraft (none of which will be active or available at the same time).



The MCA/HM Coastguard has ten S-92, eleven AW-189, one Boeing 737 + reserve, one Cessna 406 + reserve, two King Air 200's and two Piper Navajo's. That total of 29 aircraft does not include such as the Bristow Jetstream 41 and the Doncaster based Boeing 727s assigned to oil spill spraying. **More on the Coast guard and the future (UKSAR2G) next month.**

JOLLY SAILING WEATHER

And still they come.

On the 80th anniversary of the small ships rescuing the British and Allied armies from Dunkirk an flotilla of small boats head across the English Channel unimpeded by ships or aircraft.

So far this year the numbers of migrants who have crossed the English Channel from mainland Europe to England in small, often overloaded inflatables is around 1,715. Records show that so far at least 681 have crossed in May. In 2019, a total of 1,890 migrants crossed the Channel in small boats.

Ed: See the later item on this subject and Nigel Farage. The UK Government is now saying that residue rules under its former EU membership are making returning these people to Europe difficult.



INDUSTRY

O2 Aero Acquisitions, LLC has announced it has acquired Shaw Aerox, LLC (“Aerox”), a leading designer and manufacturer of installed and portable oxygen systems and accessories for aviation and medical users.

The company, which has been rebranded as Aerox Aviation Oxygen Systems, LLC, based in Bonita Springs, Florida. Aerox was established in 1981 and provides the aviation industry with oxygen delivery systems and products for general aviation, EMS, medical, and OEM manufacturers. Among its products are installed cabin emergency oxygen systems for pressurized aircraft, portable oxygen systems for light aircraft operators, personal emergency oxygen systems, and TSO-approved oxygen masks for business aircraft. Aerox pioneered long-duration portable oxygen systems with its Aerox® Oxysaver Conserving Cannula. Aerox also operates an FAA Repair Station and is ISO9001 and AS9100D certified. www.aerox.com.



Airborne Technologies (ABT) has handed the Slovakian power engineering company VUJE, and Airbus Helicopter AS350, equipped with an array of sensors.

The helicopter has eight different sensors on three external mounts that can be controlled by only one operator through the “Airborne LINX” mission system. The Sensor Suite includes the Trakka SWE-400 QUAD Camera, used for the inspection of the high voltage power lines, consisting of a HD TV camera, HR Thermal Imager for remote temperature sensing, Ultraviolet detection camera for making corona discharges visible and a stills camera. The RIEGL VUX-1UAV laser scanner used for powerline, rail tracking and pipeline inspection, offers a laser scanner (detection of sagging cables) and a high-resolution camera used to analyse vegetation and terrain. The HYSPEX hyperspectral camera is used for the classification and evaluation of vegetation.

The AS350 uses the same Airborne Linx mission system as found on the NPAS Vulcanair P68R platform. A video of that system can be reached at <https://youtu.be/tqNABRR4Lf8> and also on the primary Police Aviation News website Resources page.



Frequentis, headquartered in Vienna, has announced details of its support of the Norwegian public safety authorities to tackle increased telephone calls through the installation of a new control room solution and services that fully utilise the capabilities of the secure, digital radio network Nødnett for all emergency services in Norway.

Nødnett is the digital nationwide multi-agency public safety network in Norway. Nødnett provides reliable communication when it counts. The network is primarily used for internal and interdisciplinary communication by the police, fire departments and health services. Nødnett is owned and managed by The Directorate of Civil Protection (DSB).

Frequentis has been working on the project for fifteen years

now supporting agency cross collaboration throughout Norway. Because of the restraints brought about by the coronavirus, teams in Vienna and Norway quickly developed digital alternatives to continue support for Nødnett.

In the week before Easter, the Nødnett team performed the first “distributed remote” software acceptance test in the project’s history. This software acceptance was especially important because it is to form the baseline for the upcoming midlife upgrade for all police and health service control rooms in Norway in 2020.

To cope with the challenging situation, extraordinary solutions were devised. The software test was performed by a virtual team located in five different countries on a test system located in Norway. In addition to the audio communication between the customer and Frequentis test team members, screen sharing was provided in two steps – various web-based platforms were in use throughout the entire test processes.

Control rooms, especially in the Oslo area, have been struggling with three times more telephone calls than normal. The emergency control room expansion was jointly conducted between a local customer team and a Frequentis task force established to consult the customer and remotely integrate and configure the Integrated Communication & Control System (ICCS) 3020. <https://www.nodnett.no/en/>

Trip & Co and SII Netherlands have announced a cooperation in which they will join forces in order to support airlines with the challenge of cargo transportation in aircraft cabins. Due to the enormous demand for PAX to Cargo solutions, which Trip & Co successfully launched a few weeks ago, the company has

partnered up with SII Netherlands in order to deliver these products with STC certification process even faster all over the world.

Logical collaboration on PAX to Cargo solutions

Since the increase in the need for cargo solutions during the corona crisis, Trip & Co, has designed passenger seat bags to be able to ship cargo in passenger flights. These bags are watertight, chemical and UV resistant and also able to transfer products in all kinds of temperatures.

Customers are now able to choose from a broader spectrum of PAX to Cargo products which are instantly ready for use and meet all the requirements set by their local authorities. All solutions will be delivered with an EASA Form-1 and approval for installation including manual supplements and loading instructions.

Aviation Specialties Unlimited (ASU), has announced that the company obtained a supplemental type certificate (STC) from the FAA for NVIS (Night Vision Imaging System) use on the Pilatus PC-12. This STC is the 14th that ASU has received for fixed-wing aircraft.

In addition to the PC-12, ASU holds NVIS STCs for several other fixed-wing aircraft including the AT-402, AT-802A, AT-602, Cessna 208 Caravan, Casa C-212, C-206, DHC-4, DHC-6-300, DHC-7, DHC-8 100/200 Dash-8, Dornier 228-202, G550, and PZL M18A. For information on ASU's NVIS STCs visit www.asu-nvg.com/stc.

On the airfield and in the skies, the flight operations aircrew is continuing with its essential flight testing across the Leonardo fleet of the Merlin, Wildcat and Super Lynx aircraft. An innovative helmet and oxygen mask modification now means the crew can operate the aircraft whilst in close proximity to each other in the cockpit.

This novel application was developed by Leonardo Helicopters' (U.K.) deputy chief test pilot Charlie Pickup, who was assisted by safety equipment officer Les Medhurst, and the structural and mechanical test engineering department: Dave Jenkins, Will Miller and Andy Chilcott.

Leonardo has taken an existing oxygen mask, which is compatible with their helmets/visors and has a built-in microphone for comms, and hose, and then connected a standard filter from an industrial respiratory protection equipment [RPE] face mask. The filters have a screw thread which enables them to be replaced and the mask usually has one or two of the filters fitted.

In addition to the regular personal protective equipment that the crews use including gloves, helmets with visors and layered flight clothing, the crews are utilizing their existing oxygen masks and systems, designed for high altitude testing, in combination with the P3 RPE filters this ensures the crews receive uncontaminated air during their essential work. It is important to note that the aircraft maintenance team spend time cleaning the switches and controls with an alcohol solution prior to the crew entering the cockpit and this action is repeated when the crew completes its flight duties. [Leonardo]



After reaching a definitive agreement in January, **BAE Systems** has now completed the acquisition of Raytheon Technologies Corporation's Airborne Tactical Radios ("Airborne Radios") business, bringing industry-leading, battle-tested products and capabilities into the company's extensive Electronic Systems portfolio.

As a leading provider of airborne tactical radio solutions, the Airborne Radios business designs, manufactures, and supplies mission-critical communication systems to the U.S. Department of Defense, allied governments, and large defence aircraft manufacturers. The business has secure, battle-proven communications solutions installed on a broad range of military airborne platforms.

In 1960, Dwight D. Eisenhower was President of the United States, Johnny Cash played the first of his many free concerts behind bars, and on May 6, 1960, **Summit Aviation**, the oldest, continuous operating aircraft company in the state of Delaware was founded by Richard "Kip" Dupont.



HELICOPTER LINKS
The online yellow pages of the helicopter industrySM



In the sixty years since its founding, Summit Aviation has evolved into a full-service aviation facility serving both domestic and international customers including the U.S. Government Department of Defense and International Military, U.S. Government Non-Department of Defense and Special Missions, general and corporate aviation, and state and local law enforcement. It was acquired by Greenwich AeroGroup in 2008.

In light of COVID-19, the company plans to celebrate with the community, customers and employees at a later date

As the impact of COVID-19 touches every corner of the globe, **AirBP** are supporting the communities in which it operates through a number of initiatives alongside customers and partners.

In Australia their procurement team set to donate 35,000 N95 masks to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) for frontline staff. The donation builds on a long-standing relationship with the organization which spans decades of providing bespoke fuelling services. Air BP has been a national partner of the RFDS for the past three years.



Also, in Australia, Air BP's rapid response helped to keep a Qantas Sydney to London 'Kangaroo' route going after Singapore banned stopovers in late-March. Air BP provided an average of 266,000 litres of fuel per flight at Darwin airport, enabling aircraft to fly in from Sydney, a 3,000km/4-hour flight, and then continue on the historic non-stop 16-hour flight.

In France AirBP are supporting an initiative led by Aviation Sans Frontières, an aviation charity dedicated to providing humanitarian assistance by donating 60,000 litres of jet fuel for flights that will transport medical staff and equipment between French hospitals.

In the UK, Air BP is providing free jet fuel for use by the helicopters of a number of UK air ambulances. All these services are charitable organisations that are already supplied with jet fuel either directly or through Babcock International (see last month).

In the US Air BP is donating 3 million gallons of jet fuel to customers FedEx and Alaska Airlines to support the delivery of medical supplies and other essential goods.

In China, Air BP have been providing support through two joint ventures. The South China Blue Sky joint venture has fuelled more than 800 epidemic relief and repatriation flights. Meanwhile at Shenzhen Airport, staff working with Shenzhen Chengyuan Aviation Oil Co. have been working round the clock to maintain aviation fuel supplies for chartered flights carrying medical and relief equipment to Wuhan and other cities in China.

Air BP's efforts form part of the wider BP response to COVID-19, which includes a US\$2M donation to the WHO's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund; supporting mental health charity Mind to help more people access mental health support across the UK; providing free fuel to UK emergency service vehicles; providing discounted fuel for first responders, doctors, nurses and hospital workers in the US and donating bp's supercomputing capability to help halt the spread of the virus.

CNC Technologies, an aviation technology and wireless communications company serving the law enforcement, military and government markets, has been selected by the **Jamaica Defence Force (JDF)** to deploy airborne mission suites for the organization's fleet of Bell 429 helicopters. Custom developed to support the JDF's national security and public safety missions, the new systems will enable the JDF to securely transmit live HD video and data from its aircraft to ground-based forces around the country and to partners across the world. The JDF is the combined military of Jamaica, encompassing land, sea and air divisions.

The new mission suites incorporate **Churchill** Navigation's moving map system, the multi-sensor

WESCAM MX-10 GEN IV camera system and Troll Systems' microwave downlink technology. The mission suites will also be fully integrated with CNC.LIVE, the defence-grade portal from CNC that enables military, law enforcement and public safety users to deliver secure, real-time video and data feeds to Internet-connected devices. Through CNC.LIVE, the JDF will be able to provide live video and data intelligence to personnel and partners located anywhere in the world.

CNC will provide ongoing training and 24/7 support for the new mission suites, serving as the single point of contact for all system questions. CNC partner, AeroBrigham, will provide completion services on the aircraft.

Robinson have introduced optional impact-resistant windshields for R22, R44, and R66 helicopters to provide protection from bird strikes. Due to the lack of requirements governing small category helicopters, Robinson based the impact-resistant design on FAA requirements governing large transport category helicopters.



The new windshields are constructed of tough, energy-absorbing polycarbonate (standard windshields are made of acrylic) and installed with distinctive retention hardware. A special hard coating provides protection from scratching and weather degradation.

Tests were conducted at the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, Texas where a 2.2 lb (1 kg) bird, the FAA's standard test weight, was used to simulate a bird strike. Tests demonstrate the R22's windshield provides protection at impact speeds up to 90 knots, while the R44 and R66 windshields provide protection at impact speeds up to 100 knots.

The 2020 upgrade prices for the new windshields are \$6,600 for the R22 and \$6,800 for the R44 and R66. No special maintenance or inspections are re-

quired, although a cabin cover is recommended for prolonged outdoor exposure.

Video of an impact test is available at <https://youtu.be/gEvehu3ESZY>

Textron flew its new **Cessna SkyCourier** utility twin turboprop for the first time on May 17 and all went well. The high-wing hauler took off from Beech Field Airport, Wichita, Kansas and flew for two hours and 15 minutes. The pilots were able to accomplish everything they wanted on the flight, an excellent start to the flight test schedule.

The prototype that flew will be one of six aircraft used for certification testing. Like many of its main legacy competitors, including the Twin Otter and Dornier 228, it is powered by Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A-65SC engines and can be configured for 19 passengers, 6,000 pounds of freight or a mix of both. It will cruise at 200 knots with a range of 900 nautical miles.

MD Helicopters Inc. continues to fight the decades old judgement made against it in relation to an eight-airframe order for MD900 helicopters for the Netherlands police.

The police were looking for a helicopter that could undertake a specialist mission previously undertaken by BN2 fixed wing aircraft. At that time most helicopter manufacturers stated they could not meet the challenging specification but MD Helicopters, then operated by RDM Holdings, a company with roots in the US and Holland, claimed they could. After numerous delays and amended contracts, the contract hadn't been fulfilled by March 2005, and that led to the start of the legal action. In 2005, RDM Holdings was taken over by a New York-based private investment firm that rechristened the company MD Helicopters Holdings Inc. That company then became MD Helicopters Inc., a standalone corporation based in Mesa, Arizona.

The MD900 failed to meet the specification at that time and eventually the police bought AW139s to undertake the role. Meanwhile the police held a MD owned MD900 N9201U at their base as hostage to the money. In 2017 that airframe was released and sold on to another customer – but it seems that the move may have been premature.

Meanwhile pretty much everyone has lost sight of whether the much delayed extended NOTAR tail would have provided the performance required by the customer.

In 2008, courts in The Hague initially ordered a judgment against MD Helicopters for nearly €1.1M (US\$1.6M). A second judgment, in 2009, was for more than \$6.8M. Appeals followed, and in 2012 The Hague ordered the final consolidated judgment against MD Helicopters.

Collection of that 2012 judgment has been on hold while courts in Arizona decide if it's enforceable in the state. In 2018, the Maricopa County Superior Court decided for the police customer and earlier this year the Arizona Court of Appeals came to the same finding.

In mid-April the legal team for MD were back in court trying to get the rulings overturned. By now, even without the legal bills, the sum due to the Politie had swollen to \$7.58M.



©Jan Maakus

The new owner of **Cobham**, the group whose controversial £4bn takeover was agreed last year, is plotting the sale of a subsidiary that provided wireless coverage inside the London 2012 Olympic stadium.

The private equity giant Advent International is selling Axell Wireless a subsidiary to an as yet unidentified party. Axell based at Wimborne, Dorset, was Aerial Facilities Limited until 2008. They supply distributed antenna systems, mainly to major infrastructure projects rather than aerospace.

Axell was bought by Cobham in 2013 and has since undergone a string of restructurings because of a period of mediocre performance. [Mail/Sky]

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

1 May 2020 Sikorsky S-76B HL9646. Firefighting helicopter undertaking an air ambulance mission operated by Sejin Aviation. The helicopter with seven persons aboard crashed into the Cheonwangbong Peak of Mount Jiri in Sancheong County, South Gyeongsang Province in the southern region of South Korea, seriously injuring two people. It was on a rescue mission and one of the two injured was the patient. (Yonhap)

2 May 2020 MD Helicopters 369E N8375F. Houston Police Department. The patrol machine was at altitude and was seen to fall from the sky out of control. It crashed into the side of a low-rise ancillary building at the Biscayne At City view Apartment complex located at 17050 Imperial Valley Drive, near the Greenspoint area in the north of Houston, Texas, in the early hours. The airframe was severely damaged but there was no fire. The TFO, Officer Jason Knox died but the pilot, Chase Cormier, 35, was taken to hospital with severe injuries. There were no injuries to anyone on the ground at the apartment complex. The helicopter was assisting with a search for bodies in a nearby bayou. [media]

4 May 2020 Mil Mi-17 MAP7711 Police of North Macedonia. The police helicopter crashed upon take-off at Petrovec Airport, Skopje, after stopping for fuel. It ended up on its side but there was no fire. One of the five occupants sustained minor injuries [Republica]

4 May 2020 Embraer EMB-120RT 5Y-AXO African Express Airways operating a medical cargo flight. An Embraer EMB-120RT Brasilia transporting medical supplies crashed on approach to Bardale Airstrip, Somalia, fragmented and burned. All six on board were killed. The aircraft had departed Mogadishu and landed at Baidoa before proceeding the 50km to Bardale. On board were a captain, co-pilot, flight engineer and a trainee pilot, and two people working for the airline. One report states that the 120 was flying at 2,294 ft when hit by an object, about 3 minutes (5km) away from landing at the airstrip. The plane was chartered by an NGO and was transporting medical supplies and mosquito nets to Bardale. [Media/ASN/Twitter]

Ed: A week later Ethiopia admitted that its armed forces had shot down the Kenyan plane carrying humanitarian aid in southwest Somalia. to Baidoa Airport (BIB), in the southern Bay region on May 4, 2020. It had been chartered by a non-governmental organization. malia, and the Ethiopian authorities stated that it was flying in an unusual manner as if it were looking for a target to commit a suicide attack. The Ethiopian army is deployed to secure a nearby military camp, in a region where the Islamist militant group al Shaabab operates.

6 May 2020 LearJet 35A LV-BXU Air ambulance Was destroyed when it crashed on approach to Esquel Airport, (otherwise known as Aeropuerto Internacional Brigadier General Antonio Parodi), some 18 km from the Patagonian town Chubut Province, Argentina. There were four people onboard, two pilots, a doctor and a nurse. Both pilots survived with serious injuries. The co-pilot later died in hospital on May 7. The medical team died in the impact. There was dense fog that limited visibility to 100 metres.

15 May 2020 General Atomics Predator B Unmanned Aircraft. Operated by U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Air and Marine Operations. The craft suffered the collapse of part of its landing gear upon arrival at San Angelo Regional Airport. (Mathis Field), San Angelo, Texas after a hard landing. The aircraft left the runway and came to rest in the grass. There was a fire and the aircraft suffered extensive damage. There were no injuries. The Predator drones are used for surveillance operations and anti-narcotics missions. [San Angelo Standard-Times]

28 May 2020 Sikorsky Firehawk N. Los Angeles County Fire. The number 2 engine on the helicopter failed. The pilot made a precautionary landing in control in the remote area of 13900 block of Lang Station Road on the north side of Angeles Forest, Santa Clarita, California. No damage or injuries. [Twitter]



SAFETY

On April 28 the UK CAA issued ORS4 No.1384: Extension of Validity Periods for Licences, Ratings, Certificates and Training and Checking of Aircrew and Crew Operating under a UK National or Police Air Operator's Certificate

In response to the exceptional circumstances caused by the Covid-19 outbreak, the CAA exempts all aeroplane and helicopter commercial pilots with an EASA licence operating for the holder of a UK National AOC or PAOC from the normal validity periods for licences, certificates and ratings that expire before the 31st October 2020 and specific operator training requirements subject to the conditions in the exemption. The CAA updated this exemption to ensure that the Government's COVID-19 regulations are fully considered by all concerned.

Over in the USA there have been similar changes in the regulations. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approval on regulatory changes to pilot medical certifications, training proficiency and a host of other pressing requirements for business aviation amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The FAA addressed requests for extensions or exemptions on pilot training and medicals, and a number of other matters, in a Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR).

Similar actions have been taken by regulatory authorities around the Globe.

In the USA the NTSB has issued a report into the accident of a Bell 407 air ambulance that killed three crew members and in doing so has ascribed the fault to the operator's "inadequate management of safety," which led to a pilot departing on a flight without a thorough pre-flight weather evaluation.

The Bell 407 operated by Survival Flight, crashed in Zaleski, Ohio, on January 29, 2019, in deteriorating weather while enroute to pick up a patient for transport from one hospital to another.

NTSB Chairman Robert L. Sumwalt. Has stated that "This accident was all but invited by the actions and culture of Survival Flight, Unfortunately, we have seen yet another case of how a poor safety culture can lead to tragedy."

Radar and other data sources showed the helicopter, which was only certified to operate in visual flight conditions, flying mostly between 900- and 1,700-feet above ground level as it flew through snow showers. During a further encounter with snow, in significantly reduced visibility, the pilot made a left 180° turn in what investigators said was likely an effort to reverse course to an area of better visibility. For unknown reasons, the pilot failed to maintain altitude while making the turn and the helicopter collided with trees and then terrain in a heavily wooded area.

Interviews with Survival Flight employees led the NTSB to conclude that there was pressure from management to operate flights in challenging conditions and to take flights that other helicopter air ambulance services turned down due to inclement weather.

The NTSB found pilots and operations staff of Survival Flight routinely failed to comply with pre-flight risk assessment procedures because such noncompliance had become "normalized" by Survival Flight's deficient safety culture.

The NTSB also said the Federal Aviation Administration's inadequate oversight of Survival Flight's risk management program and the FAA's failure to require helicopter air ambulance operators to have safety management systems contributed to the accident.

In 2009 the NTSB recommended the FAA require all helicopter air ambulance operators to have safety management systems. The FAA didn't adopt the recommendation – and the NTSB subsequently identified the lack of safety management systems as a factor in a string of additional fatal crashes. In 2016 the



**Marketing to the police?
A new market area ?**

Helimetrics Ltd's unique experience with high value projects and with UK police forces and law enforcement agencies will deliver research, market appraisals and strategy proposals that make sense

Helimetrics Ltd clients already include a wide range of agencies and multi-national companies

Telephone: +44 1608 642231 and email: josmond@helimetrics.com

NTSB recommended that all on-demand aircraft operators, including helicopter air ambulances, be required to have safety management systems. That recommendation, which was reiterated three times between 2016 and 2020, has again been repeated.

In the wake of the accident the NTSB has made 14 new recommendations to the FAA, the National Weather Service and Survival Flight. The NTSB also reiterated four other recommendations previously issued to the FAA. The full report is not yet available but an abstract is available at <https://go.usa.gov/xvJ8A>.

Helicopter Association International (HAI) supports many of the NTSB's recommendations and suggestions but rejects others.

UNMANNED

Give the police drone operators a bit of leeway and it seems that general opinion is that they will surely overdo it.

As part of the special measures introduced as part of COVID-19 in late March the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) issued orders that allowed officers some leeway in following the rules of flight to make their job easier (ORS4 No.1361) and updated them in early April. As several incidents illustrated, the relaxation in the rules was perceived by some as being abused by the police drone operators.

It is all a matter of opinion of course but after just four weeks in operation the CAA clearly decided that enough was enough and on May 6 it cancelled its earlier order. (ORS4 No. 1375)

Small Unmanned Aircraft - COVID19 Pandemic - Emergency Services Response. The General Exemption which allows a more flexible, but controlled, use of a small unmanned aircraft in support of the Police response while enforcing the Government restrictions resulting from the COVID19 pandemic was Withdrawn. An associated comment made was that 'This general exemption has been revoked *following assessment of its use*, and in anticipation of increased General Aviation and other airspace user activity over the coming days and weeks'

They are apparently made of sterner stuff in Australia. No promises made there about not using drones to spy on the population and heaven help you if you are breaking the rules on pandemics!

Victoria Police have used drones to patrol beaches for violations of social distancing rules, with figures showing that millions of dollars in fines have been issued during the pandemic around Melbourne.

Cameras from the drones beamed images back to a police truck nearby and have led to the issue of 5,604 fines for breaches of the social distancing restrictions by mid-May. In financial terms that adds up to more than \$8M, with individuals being fined \$1,652 for each transgression. Mind you so far only 165 fines, two per cent, had been paid!



Following a competitive tender DroneShield Ltd has announced that its DroneGun Tactical™ product was selected as the preferred solution by the European Union police forces. The process was run by Belgium Police, with an EU-wide framework. Sales, training and local support will be managed by DroneShield's Benelux region partner ForcePro BV.

Under the framework agreement, DroneGun Tactical™ is expected to be rolled out across a range of police units across European Union. While the agreement does not specify minimum purchase quantities, DroneShield expects this agreement to produce material periodic sales over an extended period of time, with orders commencing this quarter. Further, the Company expects this framework to be a platform for sales of its other products, such as RfPatrol™ and its vehicle and fixed site products, to EU police departments.

MOVE ALONG THERE

Derbyshire Constabulary's Chief Constable Peter Goodman has announced he will retire at the end of July. It is claimed that he is leaving his vocation two years earlier than expected, under a suitable cloud after he was criticized for allowing officers to chase ramblers with drones, apparently using the easements of ORS4 No.1375. The tactics were declared "overzealous" to enforce the coronavirus lockdown rules.

Derbyshire Police published drone footage on its Twitter account in March to shame ramblers walking in the wide-open spaces for making non-essential journeys to get there, contrary to Government guidance at the time.

It faced a further backlash two days later when officers dyed a beauty spot lagoon black to make the water look less appealing to visitors.

The force insisted the retirement was not a response to the criticism.



Hard on the heels of that apparent little misjudgement the police in Kent, armed with the same set of rules, made a call on Nigel Farage the former Member of the European Parliament and something of a Brexit hero to warn him about leaving his home to travel to the south coast of England to observe and report on an illegal migrant scandal. People were landing on the beaches and, according to their interpretation of

the rules, no-one could report it! Least of all Nigel Farage. Perfect timing with the celebrations of the end of World War 2 looming! The health situation meant we could not mark that important event in a meaningful way. And the same applies to the retreat from Dunkirk. Although numbers are minor compared with the surges of people entering Europe from the Middle East and Africa there is a constant stream of people being illegally shuttled in small boats from France across the English Channel to seek political asylum.

His political stance is that the problem is bigger than anybody realises. He believes that the UK government should stop the boats from coming, not help them to shore. He witnessed the hard pressed and under resourced Border Force acting as a taxi service for illegal migrants in Dover by bringing them to safety. The number of returns to the point of origin are few.

The migrants just keep coming and with the current good weather there could be many more. The French are trying to frustrate the criminal gangs by detaining the small boats, together with their human cargoes, in French waters. Also, according to the BBC report, the Home Secretary, Priti Patel is only now looking for ways to return migrants - those who have crossed the English Channel in small boats - back to France. Problems have surfaced relating to residual EU laws but it all it seems too little too late even with the clear distractions over COVID-19.

The problem it seems is that Nigel is no longer an MEP and if he was trying to claim to be an investigative journalist he could only do that under the COVID-19 rules of engagement if he were reporting on a threat to public health. He would need to prove the arrivals were suffering from COVID-19 before setting off from his home!

Unfortunately, the hastily garnered rules that govern the UK at the moment ended up being written in a manner that would allow a foreign power to invade (see below). No one, but no one can legally report an invasion.

BUT.... Nigel Farage does in the face of criticism. And the latest is that he caught French warships shepherding migrants into a British port. Napoleon Barnier must be doubled up laughing.

Often repeated the story of migrants risking their lives, and the lives of children, by crossing the English Channel in unseaworthy, often overloaded inflatable boats just won't go away. Common sense suggests that if every £60 each way passenger on a cross channel ferry must have available a lifejacket, a place in a liferaft, or lifeboat, and receive a safety briefing, then how can the British and French governments tolerate desperate migrants being herded into overloaded inflatable boats at £3,000 per head for the same journey, one way! Clearly, different rules for cross channel ferries and for criminally overloaded inflatable boats.

Fill a landing craft and deposit each of them on the beach in Calais with a pack of cheese sandwiches seems safe enough. Have we got any landing craft?



We used to quote Health and Safety but now apparently the whimsies, including future kings, get off on mentions of stress and mental health. Never done a night duty in the middle of Epping Forest, totally alone in the pitch dark, the lot of them.

If this were happening in California, or Florida, I have absolutely no doubt that the volunteers of the US Coast Guard Auxiliary (Air), together with their volunteer colleagues in the US Civil Air Patrol, would be flying Homeland Security coastal patrols in light 'spotter' aircraft. The majority of USCAP aircraft, mostly Cessna 172's and 182's is provided with Federal funding. However, the volunteer auxiliary coast guard officers, members of the US Coast Guard, are reimbursed for flying their own, private aircraft.

Good news... The coronavirus pandemic has slowed trade-based money laundering systems that drug trafficking groups use to repatriate profits and move Chinese capital into Southern California. As a result, dirty money is piling up in Los Angeles. In the last three weeks alone, federal agents seized more than \$3M in suspected drug proceeds [LA Times]

Nowhere it seems is there a real government of national unity. Even the ongoing COVID-19 is not bringing politicians together, the backstabbing continues! Everyone is into blaming their government for death tolls surpassing this or that that other country in the world – you can prove anything with numbers. There are more dead in the USA than in anywhere else but of course its bigger and has a larger population. In the United Kingdom they are beating themselves up because they have more deaths than Spain and France.



It's clear, the government are incompetent!

Looking at the population levels in each of the European countries things do not look so bad, the U.K. has the highest at around 70 million, compared to 66 million in France and 49 million in Spain. It all looks much better when the population density is taken into consideration. The U.K. has a population density of 280 people per square kilometre, France has a population density of 102 people per km² Spain has a population density of 97 people per km². Unfortunate though Germany bucks the trend in only having 7,549 deaths among a population of 83.7 million and a population density close to that in the UK of 232/sq.km. To that mix you can add that the much lauded solution in Sweden – where all the bars remained open - ended up killing as greater percentage of its people than any other country.

We are never going to know how many died of the COVID-19 in some parts of Africa simply because their infrastructure does not have the capability or will to either investigate the causes of individual deaths. We do not even know when the Pandemic started. Let's face it 100 years on we are still arguing where the post Great War Spanish Flu came from [USA, China or Spain] or how many it killed worldwide [best guess 50 million].



PEOPLE

Dick Trueman Chief Test Pilot for each of the Marenco/Kopter SH-09 helicopters @Kopter/Leonardo

Dick Trueman, until recently acting as the test pilot for Kopter/Leonardo, has died. It is believed that he passed after a short illness in Birmingham.

Richard 'Dick' Trueman was ex-RAF and a product of the Empire Test Pilots School, he had numerous international links with the airborne emergency services industry, being involved with several high profile aerospace programmes including the US Presidential VH-71 (EH-101) and the ongoing development of the Marenco SKYe SH-09.

He gained a University of Birmingham BEng in Chemical and Mineral Engineering (1986-89) before joining the Royal Air Force in 1989 flying support helicopters incorporating three years with the Rotary Wing Test Squadron MOD Boscombe Down and the Empire Test Pilots School

In 2002, for two years, he was the Deputy Chief Test Pilot at McAlpine Helicopters, Oxford (later Eurocopter UK and Airbus Helicopter) and McAlpine Aviation Services Limited (MASL). McAlpine Helicopters was the UK franchise for Eurocopter rotorcraft, and he was focused on the flight testing of rotary wing aircraft involved in the police, air ambulance and corporate roles and flying with units. He was still the deputy Chief Pilot at MASL when it became PremiAir Aviation Services Limited.

He will have flown most if not all of the current NPAS fleet and was for a time Chief Pilot with the Dyfed-Powys A109 unit.

In 2004 he took the post of Senior Test Pilot with AgustaWestland in Yeovil, he was to stay there for over six years hands on with the planning, conduct, and reporting on experimental, development and production rotary wing flight test activities principally on the AW101, Lynx and Wildcat helicopters including the BERP IV main rotor programme and the early flights of the US VH-71 Presidential version of the AW101. He moved on in 2010 to work with and then became a part of the senior leadership team at Callen-Lenz, Salisbury, flight testing helicopters and gyroplanes.

Although he had moved into the Test Pilot world fully, he still hankered after operational flying but being eager to keep his family in one place for continuity he was limited to being UK based.

When the NPAS aviation consultant job came up in 2012, he was one of three to apply and one of two to take it through to the interview stage. Ollie Dismore took the post and Dick went forward with the high-profile flight testing for Marengo, Kopter and others.

A Dorset UK police officer assigned to the National Police Air Service (NPAS) has been charged with murder after a woman was found strangled in a car park.

Dorset Police named the woman as Claire Parry, 41, from Bournemouth, and said PC Timothy Brehmer, who has been charged, was not on duty at the time of the incident in West Parley. The ambulance service called police to the car park of the Horns Inn, in Christchurch Road, after paramedics found two people needing medical assistance.

Mrs Parry was taken to the Royal Bournemouth Hospital but died the next day. A post-mortem examination concluded that the cause of death was a brain injury caused by compression of the neck.

PC Brehmer was arrested at the scene of the incident and taken to Poole Hospital for treatment to injuries to his arms. He was later discharged from hospital and was further arrested on suspicion of murder. The pair were known to each other.

BOOK REVIEW

Still available is the Haynes Police Helicopter Manual compiled by Richard Brandon. Check out the taster PDF at <https://files.elfsight.com/storage/0077dba8-d8ea-4cae-834f-22cc500b099e/6ead6f2b-f28e-499e-9786-7fc2425c6ded.pdf> or visit www.haynes.com

AND FINALLY

Down in DeLand, Florida on May 16/17 a gathering the Americans choose to call a block party attracted an estimated 3,000 people. If nothing else it was clear that the groups of people attending it were not exactly adhering to the Social Distancing rules, it was congested, noisy and unruly. There were arrests and complaints of police brutality.

As a result of criticism, the Volusia County Sheriff's Office released video of the chase and take down of a suspect during authorities' efforts to disperse the crowd late Saturday and early Sunday morning.

Sheriff Mike Chitwood said in a press release that negative press coverage from one media outlet was one of the reasons to release the video, to show the sheriff's office perspective of the events.

It is an interesting compilation video in that it mixes helicopter footage on the Saturday evening with body camera footage on the Sunday morning. The latter has foul language issues.

People throwing glass bottles at law enforcement, punching, someone pointing a gun at a crowd and two convicted criminals exchanging a loaded gun right in front of police. And those involved claimed it was a race issue. (Officer.com/Sentinel)

Ed: Apparently DeLand is a very 'small but inviting' community 40 miles north of Orlando. It's got a good safe reputation - but I guess the video may damage that some. The newspaper headline of the events depicted say it was a riot. Well I have been to a riot or two and this was barely a disturbance [except for the guns of course]. In any case I think I will stick to England where we used to do riots occasionally but thankfully no-one really knows what a gun is.



So, in this summer of COVID madness, as you sip your ice cool Corona beer in the sun and could do with the entertainment just click on the link below to transport yourself to a great deal of madness....



Just go to www.officer.com and search on “**Block Party**”

PAVCon FUTURE

This month would have been the 2020 PAVCon Europe event in Berlin. Cancelled of course back in early March. Most of the paperwork has been completed and money returned to exhibitors where requested. There will be no event this year but PAVCon is talking to the organisers of the 10-12 November 2020 European Rotors event scheduled to be held in Cologne, Germany with a view to inserting a ‘mini PAVCon’ conference feature into that event. This event may provide the first opportunity for an international meeting place this year.

It may be that borders will remain closed to foreign travellers even then (five months away) but with a bit of pre-planning in place it may work out as we learn more about the longevity of the COVID-19.

www.europeanrotors.eu

LOOMING ON THE HORIZON

Who knows whether September will be too soon for events to restart? On September 15 we may see the annual Commercial UAV Expo Americas in Las Vegas – this year in Paris Hotel. The conference programmes may vary from year to year, but the key component is highlighting the many ways drones are improving how work gets done by making it faster, cheaper, safer, or better. Today, what this can mean and how it can be defined has taken on a whole new dimension. In order to keep their employees safe, companies may not be able to be physically on site, and if they are, they must learn how to operate with a reduced workforce. Drones are one of the many tools that are capable of stepping in to fill the workforce gap and keep people safe. The challenge for the industry is to find ways to engage companies with a valid

**COMMERCIAL
UAV EXPO**

AMERICAS

PARIS LAS VEGAS
SEP. 15-17, 2020

**DRONES FOR PUBLIC SAFETY
& EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**Register by August 15
for Early Bird Pricing!**

Use code **SAVE100CB** for an
additional \$100 off a Conference Pass!

expouav.com

Drones as First Responders

A Force Multiplier

Collision Scene Reconstruction

Disaster Response

Drones in PD's and FD's

Presented by: **COMMERCIAL
UAV NEWS**

business case, not only highlighting how they can help in today's current circumstance, but also how they can improve workflows and KPIs for the long term.

Throughout this pandemic, Commercial UAV News has been able to connect with a number of businesses who have been tackling this challenge head-on. They not only see the value that their service provides today, but also how this can assist companies into the future. Here are a few examples:

It is only three months until the Nineteen Group are hoping to run their cancelled and reset exhibitions and conferences held over from April.

Late September is the hope for a series of emergency services events that have been co-located at the National Exhibition Centre [NEC] Birmingham alongside its existing Emergency Services Show.

Now the four co-located events - The Security Event, The Fire Safety Event, The Health and Safety Event and The Facilities Event are to move to the 22-23 September 2020.

All four events had already reached twice the size of last year and been receiving record-breaking pre-registration numbers, but the market has to settle and deal with unprecedented circumstances.

Free-of-charge passes now offer access to 5 industry leading events.

The Emergency Services Show: <https://www.emergencyuk.com/>

The Security Event: <https://www.thesecurityevent.co.uk/welcome>

The Fire Safety Event: <https://www.firesafetyevent.com/>

The Health & Safety Event: <https://www.healthandsafetyevent.com/welcome>

The Facilities Event: <https://www.facilitiesevent.co.uk/>

Free of charge parking is available for attendees registered for The Security Event, click the link to register now: <https://www.thesecurityevent.co.uk/free-passes-new-date>



That's all folks



FACING YOUR NEXT HELICOPTER DECISION ?

AEROPTIMO

MANAGEMENT & ADVISORY

WWW.AEROPTIMO.COM INFO@AEROPTIMO.COM +44 (0) 1628 879 884