

# Police Aviation News



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# AIRBUS H140 REVEALED



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## AUSTRALIA

*QPS-POLAIR-Bell 429-(Kana-Photography-and-Surf-Life-Saving-Queensland)*

**QUEENSLAND:** At the Avalon Australian International Airshow last month Bell Textron Inc. announced that the Queensland Police Service (QPS) has entered into a second service provision contract for QPS POLAIR services for three additional Bell 429s, which will expand the number of Bell helicopters in its current fleet to six.

In 2022, contract provider Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) signed for three Bell 429s, operating the QPS POLAIR fleet responsible for patrolling and supporting on-ground policing efforts in southeast Queensland.

The new batch of Bell 429s is part of a POLAIR service provision contract between QPS and Townsville-based Meridian Helicopters to provide a similar airborne law enforcement capability in north Queensland for the next 10 years.

*Editor: Until 2003 Queensland was a wholly fixed wing operator, their main need was to transport officers across the giant state. From small beginnings based on a leased MD500 equipped with a pre-used Wescam EO/IR turret acquired from North Wales Police in the UK, the police have embraced rotary wing in a big way along its coastal areas.*

*The announcement was part of a general press release from the Avalon show which announced that a total of five new Bell 429s were being added to the Australian police fleet. Two were the previously announced airframes for South Australia.*

*Other law-enforcement and SAR organisations to use the Bell 429 include the New South Wales Police, Canadian Coast Guard, Indonesia National Police, New York Police Department, Royal Thai Police, and Swedish National Police.*

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA:** The Toll Group is to take over Government aviation contracts for police and EMS from 2026. The contract replaces a Babcock MCS Australasia contract which currently flies a Bell 412 and H145 for the police and three Bell 412s in the EMS role. From October 2027, two new production Bell 429s will replace the Babcock fleet [Parapex Media]

We cannot let this month go by with out making mention of the new airframe from Airbus—the H140 which was officially launched at last month's Verticon Show in Dallas. For a while it was misidentified in the over the fence shots as the next in line for the H135 series but now we know it sits between that and the H145 in capability and brings a five blade rotorhead and larger cabin that will initially be attractive to the HEMS market. It cannot be long before law enforcement is attracted to the type. [Image by Helian]

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## CANADA

RCMP: As reported in last month edition of *Police Aviation News*, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has leased two Sikorsky Blackhawk helicopters to bolster its efforts to stop crossings of the 9,000 km Canada/USA border at a cost of \$5.3M. At the time this was seen as a somewhat incredible task for just two helicopters even if their efforts were bolstered by air patrols by the admittedly limited availability of existing helicopters and fixed wing surveillance aircraft along with new drones and ground based towers.



Early in March CBC reported on their assessment of the resources put into patrolling one of the longest land borders in the world.

The RCMP leased the two venerable Black Hawk helicopters to patrol the border to stave off Donald Trump's tariff threats – a move subsequently proved to be wasted - CBC News's visual investigations team tracked the helicopters for six weeks to record the measure of their success. The analysis appears to show that the outcomes were limited with just one would be illegal crossing from the U.S. into Canada being thwarted.

CBC logged 68 flights between January 17 — when patrolling officially began — and February 28. The team tried to exclude positioning flights and anything that was not a border patrol. The RCMP declined to share specifics with CBC News leaving them just the option of spotting trends. No evidence was offered about the other Canadian surveillance activity or of the, likely extensive, flight activities on the US side of the border seeking to undertake a similar mission..... *"Stop the people...."*

In the original 800 word article CBC set out several scenarios they encountered in their somewhat hands off research of the activity of the Blackhawks, mainly trying to dispassionately analyze the effect of the various 4 hour flights over the border area.

Across the country over the same period, the RCMP stopped 15 people trying to cross illegally from the U.S. in three separate operations. In only one case was a Black Hawk involved.



Christian Leuprecht, professor at Royal Military College of Canada and Queen's University commented on the evidence gleaned by CBC

*"It's not clear to me that aerial surveillance is the greatest challenge that we face at the border, in part because the United States already runs very rigorous aerial surveillance across and along the entire border"* [Eric Szeto CBC]

SASKATCHEWAN: In Regina they have just come out of the other side of a lengthy period without their own air support.

To the delight of some and the chagrin of others, the Regina Police Service's Aerial Support Unit (ASU) is back in the skies with its Cessna 182T,C-GRPF returned to service on February 14, 2025 after undergoing repairs over the previous 10 months. The plane was grounded in April 2024 after it "was damaged during a routine maintenance operation," police said in a news release. Specifically, it appears that a wing was damaged while returning to the hangar.



The aircraft only entered service in January 2023 after being given a go-ahead two years earlier. Getting the ASU off the ground took approximately \$1.5M, with SGI and the Ministry of Justice kicking in dollars to the program. The ministry in particular paid \$600,000 from its Civil Forfeiture branch — money used to purchase the plane's camera and related equipment. All told, the city paid approximately \$275,000, with the province footing the rest of the bill. Despite its use as a law enforcement tool, the Cessna's deployment hasn't come without criticism. A University of Saskatchewan academic says the presence of police aircraft can lead to over-policing of Regina's citizenry.

Within its first seven shifts back in the air, the ASU "assisted with nearly 60 calls for service and a number of arrests.



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## UNITED KINGDOM

NPAS: Late in February the National Police Air Service (NPAS) selected global manufacturer Schiebel to support its most ambitious trial so far of 'Beyond the Visual Line of Sight' (BVLOS) uncrewed aircraft operations.

The trial – which, in 2024, successfully achieved a place in the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) BVLOS integration sandbox - will evaluate the feasibility of using drones/UAS to work alongside crewed police helicopters and aeroplanes in support of policing operations across England and Wales.

David Walters, NPAS Head of Futures and Innovation, said the aim of the trial was to determine if advancements in aviation technology can bring future benefits to policing and, if they can, how they could be safely introduced into UK airspace.

"We will be evaluating how we might integrate uncrewed aircraft into the existing NPAS operating model, under the current management of our CAA-approved Accountable Manager and Form 4 certificate-holders, who are qualified and accountable for the delivery of safe police air operations over England and Wales."

Schiebel will be flying the CAMCOPTER S-100 in a carefully selected and controlled environment to assess the UAS capabilities, as part of the concept for a future blended fleet, operated by NPAS.

Schiebel will join the National Air Traffic Control Service (NATS) as part of the team supporting the NPAS Futures and Innovation team with the trial, which is funded by the Home Office and scheduled to see its first test flight this summer.

As previously reported in PAN, an area in the Severn estuary, in South West England, has been selected for the trial flights, away from any built-up environments and potential conflicts.

For the last 24 months, NPAS has been building a robust safety case, which has included testing a 'detect and avoid' solution, to ensure the trial can operate safely and with minimum disruption to the public and other airspace users. Along with the potential capabilities for policing operations, the trial will also evaluate the effectiveness of the 'detect and avoid' solution. <sup>[NPAS]</sup>

*Editor: It remains to be seen whether the S-100 is a suitable craft for the types of BVLOS mission profiles that NPAS may be visualising. So far they have talked about two missions, one being the DFR which hith-*

erto has been seen as the area of a small electric quad rotor. I cannot see that having a noisy Wankel engine bursting into life at 3am in an urban street is going to be welcomed by the neighbours. The second mission mentioned is that of extending surveillance tens of miles from one of the existing helicopter bases. Little detail has been explained on this but a S-100 (if it is deemed reliable enough) could fit into this scenario. For the time being the trial is about understanding and designing a role and need without the perfect or at least acceptable aircraft to undertake the final mission. From the statements coming from the office of the NPCC it would seem that they think that the case for an unmanned police aviation future is already proven. I would suggest it is far from that. In terms of proven technology it sits with the airship and the autogyro – largely unproven and disappointing and therefore unadopted.

NPAS finally ordered seven new build Airbus Helicopters H135 to start to replace the now elderly existing fleet of helicopters. The firm order is the first output of a Framework Contract, signed with the BlueLight Commercial (BLC) procurement agency, which confirms Airbus as the exclusive supplier of helicopters for NPAS for up to six years. The order was announced during the Verticon event in Dallas early last month. Airbus Helicopters says one of the new aircraft will initially be employed in training to prepare pilots in using its Helionix avionics system. The technology is significantly different from the airframes currently in service.

Fitted with a bearingless main rotor, Airbus' signature Fenestron® shrouded tail rotor, engine software modifications, and a new lateral air intake, the H135 provides additional payload and delivers best-in-class performance throughout its flight envelope compared to the existing fleet.

The currently fleet is a mix of Turbomeca (SAFRAN) and Pratt & Whitney Canada's 206 engines, a feature that brought its own complications to the current day to day operation and removed flexibility in both daily airframe care and crew allocation. I am reliably informed that the new order is for the SAFRAN option only and that, despite them being marginally the younger airframes the PWC powered 135P2 airframes will be the first to be disposed of.

Chief Superintendent (also listed as Temporary Assistant Chief Constable) Vicki White the current chief of the NPAS operation said:

"The aircraft we currently operate were transferred to NPAS from individual police forces when the national service was formed over 13 years ago and, as such, they are some of the oldest and most-flown aircraft of their type in any UK fleet."

Aviation analytics company Cirium (Flight International) details the in-service aircraft as being aged between 14 and 22 years.

"We are extremely proud to have been the sole provider of NPAS' helicopters since its formation... [and] it is a great honour for us to continue playing this critical role in the nation's security," says Richard Attack, interim managing director of Airbus Helicopters in the UK.

NPAS currently operates a mixed fleet of 16 H135s, four differing configuration's, four H145s of two configurations and four fixed wing light twins from 14 bases in England and Wales. There is a suggestion that the EC145s operated out of Lippitts Hill, London, are to be disposed of as early as next year. Recently one of the airframes G-MPSC c/n 9075 celebrated reaching 15,000 hours after 20 years of service. In the last year 'C' has flown under 500 hours but the average has of course been significantly higher. As a type they have been less resilient to the pressures of delivering up to 1,000 hours a year – at least when compared to such as the EC135, with longer maintenance periods reflecting the venerable origins of the design - the underlying 1979 MBB BK117 series airframe.



If the EC145s are withdrawn before the new fleet of H135s turn up it will place an added strain on the already hard pressed rotary fleet of early model EC135s, denuding them of a handful of aircraft and placing an impossible strain on availability across the rest of England and Wales. Readers may recall that the three airframe Metropolitan Police fleet was (*had to be*) boosted by taking the not quite the same EC145 G

-DCPB from Exeter airport to keep the ageing London fleet near viable. The main differences between the London and Exeter airframes were the internal layout and the FLIR 15inch sensor rather than the Wescam 15

The still underperforming fixed wing fleet are simply not stepping up to the needs but much of that seems to relate to a lack of pilots and TFOs across the organisation.

Perhaps a new contract being formulated for the fixed wing support will go some way towards improving the situation. BlueLight is working in collaboration with the NPAS on a future tender opportunity for the provision of Fixed-Wing Aircraft Maintenance and Continuing Airworthiness Management.

BLC and NPAS are talking to suppliers to understand the options available to them for a procurement strategy for a tender to either replace or continue with the Gama support for the fixed wing fleet of Vulca-nair P68 aircraft.

The process includes a request for information and a proposed face-to-face market engagement event to analyse the supply and installation of spare parts, manage third-party warranties, provide engine support services in addition to looking after role equipment, modifications and aircraft de-modification works for disposal purposes.

It is envisaged that the next series of contracts will cover the period from April 1, 2026 to April 2031, with a possible extension to 1 April 2033 (7 years and 1 day).

A request for information via a written response has been requested in the first instance. As well as a proposed face-to-face market engagement session. This is proposed to be held in the first week of April at a location to be confirmed. Suppliers wishing to attend had to register their interest by March 2025. Tenders are expected to be submitted by the start of May.



*Editor: At last some movement on the rotary wing fleet but, as yet some of the important details are yet to come. The selection of the EO/IR sensor for the future, the searchlight all these will read across the industry. The last fleet sensor order was for the L3 Harris/Wescam MX-10 and decided on price rather than operational capability. Operators prefer a larger sensor in the 15 inch class, even so the main criteria remains that the camera is reliable and well supported.*

*The eventual requirement will be for some 16 hopefully identical aircraft and that will have a significant impact on the suppliers (32 engines, 16 each of EO/IR, searchlight, downlink etc amount to important contracts).*

*The initial moves to set up a contract to look after the under-utilised fixed wing fleet will hopefully enhance the workload undertaken by that part of the fleet but no doubt the lack operational support effort by the P68s continues to disappoint.*

*There are some changes in management ongoing, Vicki White is due to leave shortly and Scott Gallagher is returning after a relatively short sojourn in industry in the post of Continuing Airworthiness Engineer. Scott left NPAS as Head of Projects and joined Nova Systems as a Senior Business Development & Capture Manager, Special Mission Aircraft from September 2023 through until February this year.*

*Sadly I guess that after a couple of years of unrestricted conversations at various events including PAVCon Europe we will return to not speaking again as he returns to operating under NPAS/NPCC journalism rules!*

*Little has really changed in Wakefield. The fixed wing is struggling to get a single TFO in the aircraft—and the P68 was designed for only one—but the rotary wing fleet are having similar problems and their helicopters are laid out for a crew of three. It is difficult to operate all the equipment with only a single TFO. There seems to be something inherently negative about working for the West Yorkshire Police.*



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## UNITED STATES

**US CUSTOMS & BORDER PROTECTION:** Air and Marine Operations (AMO), an operational component of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, made use of its airborne long-range detection capabilities to assist in the interdiction of a go-fast vessel smuggling narcotics in the Eastern Pacific.



During a routine patrol, a Lockheed P-3 Orion of AMO detected a suspicious go-fast vessel and relayed the information to Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S). The AMO aircrew provided real-time tracking and vectored an El Salvadorian law enforcement vessel to interdict.

As the law enforcement vessel closed in, the smugglers jettisoned their contraband in an attempt to evade capture. The P-3 crew main-

tained surveillance, detected the discarded narcotics and directed water born forces in to recover them. Meanwhile the El Salvadorian law enforcement vessel intercepted the go-fast, detaining three individuals, and seized approximately 3,300 pounds of cocaine.

**ARIZONA:** The presence of the nearly new Peoria Police and Fire Department Bell 505 N907PF c/n 65559 at the recent Verticon in Dallas Texas gave grounds for a bit of political infighting in the city of Peoria (population 195,000) last month.

Judi Smith a candidate politician raised issues when the Bell 505 was absent from the region when a 20-year-old man went missing in north Peoria. The result was that the city had to rely upon outside agencies, including the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office drones and mounted search teams, the Phoenix Firebird helicopter, and even Arizona Department of Corrections bloodhounds to assist in the search. Not a scenario presented to the city council back in December 2023 when the purchase of the helicopter – the first for the city – was agreed.

Smith stated that the situation raises serious concerns: If the helicopter was so essential, why wasn't it available for an emergency rather than promoting at a helicopter show? [OTS]

*Editor: That's the usual trouble when a new resource is available – the expectations of the taxpayer get way ahead of the capability of the operation even before this Bell 505 had chance to get up to speed. Back in 2023 the city council was told that the unit would not be fully capable before 2027 but little details like that get lost in the telling.*

*The helicopter was acquired to cover an area of 230 square miles, and eventually offer law enforcement capabilities, search and rescue capabilities, firefighting services, and increase response times throughout the city over a number of years. The helicopter along with offices for the pilot and maintenance crew are based at a hangar at Glendale Municipal Airport with initial staffing for the new aviation unit will come from existing officers and firefighters. The first pilot for the aviation unit is a current Peoria Police officer who was an Army helicopter pilot. Peoria Police also has an officer who was a chief helicopter mechanic with NYPD's air unit and at the time it was believed that other staff could be sourced.*

*The Bell only arrived last August and was ceremonially handed over on the 20<sup>th</sup> of that month. Meanwhile the unit has been finding its feet (working up) towards a deployment date set at October 2025. Even then there will be specialist missions (and additional pilots) that will be added to the operation as the unit builds up to that hoped for and predicted 2027 ability to undertake all the missions on the agenda for some 40 hours a week.*

*The police department even announced that the air unit crews were in Dallas to take up the aviation and engineering classes offered there as part of Verticon and receiving substantial training credits for taking their aircraft there as an exhibit.*

*Meanwhile the population in Peoria will see the Bell flying over, will forget the detail of the promises made in 2023 and expect a full 24/7/365 service from now onwards!*



©Image by Helian

ARIZONA: On March, 11 residents of Tucson voted on Proposition 414, also known as the Safe & Vibrant City Initiative. It was expected that Proposition 414 would pave the way for an increased sales tax in the city limits by a half-cent per dollar. The increased tax was the key to raise \$80M a year over the 10 year lifespan of the tax.

A percentage of the revenue, some \$16M, was already slated to be used to upgrade the police air support unit with two new aircraft and equipment upgrades. Unfortunately the vote went against the lawmakers and the new funding stream was denied them.

Currently, the Air Support Unit operates three Bell 206B -III Jet Ranger helicopters. One of the helicopters, N304PD, was manufactured in 1999. Two others, N305PD and N306PD, were built in 2005. The plan was to retire two helicopters and purchase one new helicopter and one new airplane as replacements.

In 2024 two of the current helicopters received Trakka Systems "Total Mission Solutions" upgrade. This consisted of equipping both with a TrakkaCam TC-300: compact EO/IR imaging system, a TrakkaBeam TLX: search light and a TrakkaMaps TM-100: mission mapping and video management system. It was assumed that these equipment packages could be transferred over to the new helicopter.

CALIFORNIA: The Los Angeles Police Department is to use the Loft Dynamics Virtual Reality system to train its pilots.

LAPD Air Support Division, the largest municipal airborne unit in the United States, has become the first U.S. law enforcement agency to use virtual reality (VR) for pilot training. The department has installed a state-of-the-art VR flight simulator developed by Loft Dynamics—the global leader in flight simulation technology and the only one to be qualified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

LAPD will use Loft Dynamics' simulator to enhance the safety, efficiency, realism, and accessibility of its training, enabling the crew to practice under highly realistic conditions and prepare for every scenario they may encounter.

"It has been extremely difficult to incorporate mission-based scenarios into our training program with the realism and frequency necessary for the training to be effective," said Kevin Gallagher, Chief Pilot for LAPD. "The acquisition of the Loft Dynamics VR simulator and our partnership with their software engineers has solved that problem. The realism of the full-motion platform, combined with the ability to custom-build highly specific police scenarios, is revolutionizing the way we train—whether it's inadvertent IIMC entry, low-altitude chases, or night vision operations.



This technology ensures that in critical moments, our pilots are prepared to execute with precision and confidence—because in aviation, you don't rise to the occasion, you fall to the level of your training."

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LAPD's Loft Dynamics VR simulator, featuring a six-degrees-of-freedom motion platform and a full-scale replica cockpit of the Airbus Helicopters H125, will be used by the department's 50 pilots for regular training at its heliport. LAPD is implementing a structured, VR-centric training curriculum designed by Gallagher. As part of the new curriculum, LAPD is collaborating with Loft Dynamics to develop customized scenarios tailored to the unique demands of law enforcement operations. These include high-speed car chase simulations, with adjustable parameters such as suspect vehicle speed and path, and scenarios that integrate the use of the Tyler Special Operations Platform within the virtual cabin.

The department is also embracing Loft Dynamics' newly released VR demonstration platform, LofTWIN, to expand training capabilities. LofTWIN allows chief pilots and operators to capture and share their scenario -and manoeuvre-based lessons in VR.

For LAPD, Gallagher has created VR lessons on critical procedures, covering everything from aerial chases to emergency landings. In these virtual training sessions, the LAPD pilot sits beside Gallagher's full-body avatar in the simulated cockpit, experiencing force feed back from controls, and listening to his verbal instruction. In turn, LAPD pilots gain round-the-clock access to a consistent precise and fully immersive training experience. Performance tracking features enable pilots to measure and benchmark their progress against Gallagher's expertise and objectives, following evidence-based training best practices

**CALIFORNIA:** On March 24 multiple social media sources reported the whole of the California Highway Patrol (CHP) air operation had been grounded. One source suggested that no flights were able to self-launch and that each mission had to have specific permission to fly.

In turn CHP denied claims that its air operations were grounded. They cited multiple verifiable flights as taking place and suggested that concerns likely stemmed from recent changes to the organizational structure.

*Editor: It is early days yet but it seems that the management are taking a firm grip on the operation in not allowing the individual base to self launch. All calls must be filtered by senior ranks. This injects some fairly major inefficiencies into the system and will undoubtedly put those who might be served in greater danger through adding delays.*

*It all looks similar to the type of over regulated operation being run in the Middle East, China and India and there are some aspects that fit well with the 'mega-control' attitude that now prevails in the UK NPAS.*

**FLORIDA:** Early in March Sarasota County took delivery of their 2024 build Bell 429 N2891 c/n 57499 Air 1 from Aero Brigham Llc based at the airport in Decatur, Texas.

The helicopter fleet of the Florida State Guard continues to grow. A used 1998 model Bell 412EP, N402TL, was recently added. The aircraft originally served with Jamaica Defence Force before being imported back into the US. AeroBrigham completed a refurbishment and upgrade to the helicopter in 2023 and used it as display aircraft at the 2024 HAI Heli-Expo. The 412 is equipped for IFR operation and is equipped with a rescue hoist.

The Aviation Response Squadron equipped 12 new drone teams and received their first three aircraft: two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, and one King Air 350ER, increasing capability to support maritime interdiction, medical evacuation assistance, disaster relief, and search and rescue operations.

**NEW YORK STATE:** At the recent Verticon (Heli-Expo) in Dallas New York State Police has placed an order for an Airbus H160 and three H145 helicopters, making them the first law enforcement agency in the U.S. to add an H160 to their fleet. This announcement follows the agency's order of two H145s in 2024 as New York State Police moves to replace some of their 20 existing helicopters. Mainly based on the Bell 430 and Huey.

Originally formed in 1931, the New York State Police Aviation Unit provides services to police across the state, as well as lifesaving and environmental conservation services.

The H160 is one of the world's most technologically advanced helicopters, designed and built to deliver the highest levels of operational safety while providing unmatched comfort for rotorcraft in its class. Capable of performing wide-ranging missions including law enforcement, offshore transportation, search and rescue, private and business aviation, and emergency medical services, the H160 has entered into ser-

vice in Brazil, Canada, France, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, U.K., U.S. and many other European countries.

The H145 family of helicopters has been a staple of the airborne law enforcement community for more than two decades, and has built a reputation for its exceptional capability and reliability. In total, there are more than 1,740 H145 family helicopters in service around the world, and more than 200 of those are used for public services and law enforcement missions. Powered by two Safran Arriel 2E engines, the H145 is equipped with full authority digital engine control (FADEC) and the Helionix digital avionics suite. The helicopter's CO2 emissions are also the lowest amongst its competitors.

NEW YORK: The Westchester County Police Department (WCPD) continues to lead the way in law enforcement rotorcraft operations by teaming up with Outerlink to complete the Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) of the Air IP™ Wi-Fi system in their Bell 407 helicopters.

For years, WCPD has recognized its helicopters as essential assets, not only for aerial surveillance but also for capturing critical officer position data within the aircraft. Seeking a cost-effective and reliable alternative to their outdated and costly microwave system, WCPD opted to equip their fleet with Outerlink's Air IP™ system.

The Air IP™ Wi-Fi system delivers reliable HD video from the helicopter with a minimal half-second delay to the County's Genetec Server.

WCPD found that the original microwave system had reduced capabilities due to line of sight limitations. It was costly to purchase and to maintain the ground infrastructure.

They decided to equip their newest Bell 407GX<sub>i</sub> with the Air IP™ and replace the existing microwave on the older airframe to take advantage of the existing cellular networks. Sterling Helicopter was instrumental in making the process quick and efficient.

PENNSYLVANIA: And finally, one of the more quirky aspects of US airborne law enforcement, the unit that really has very little public to support it.

Liberty Township Police, in Adams County on the southern border of Pennsylvania announced last month that it had acquired a helicopter for its police and the story was duly launched on Fox News.

Liberty Township is little more than a village on the south west of Pennsylvania, United States. The population was 1,237 at the time of the 2010 census that is just over 400 households in an area that covers 16.62 square miles (43.05 km<sup>2</sup>). Well they launched an 1981 MD369D in March 2025 with a view to offering a 24/7 service from April 1. The MD is on lease from someone in Montana.

*Editor: Did I mention that the total stated staff of Liberty Township police is just five officers and one of them is now clearly the pilot! Similar situations have emerged before in the USA, one man and his privately owned Cessna 150 flying missions for the Sheriff is not too rare in the USA. I recall a unit of just three officers selling off its helicopter to pay for a fleet of greatly more useful motor cars. I guess we will never hear of the Liberty Township MD again, but you never know, the Fox channel may well have another quiet day!*



# AIR AMBULANCE

## AUSTRALIA

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA:** The Toll Group has announced the award of a major Government contract to provide comprehensive State Police, Ambulance and Rescue Aviation Services to South Australia. The contract will significantly improve the state's emergency response and law enforcement capabilities, while enhancing public safety and healthcare accessibility for all South Australians.

The contract replaces a Babcock MCS Australasia contract which currently flies a Bell 412 and H145 for the police and three Bell 412s in the EMS role.

Awarded by the Attorney General's Department of South Australia, the landmark 15-year contract will see Toll provide a fleet of eight aircraft – both fixed-wing and rotary-wing – specifically deployed to provide vital services, including law enforcement, search and rescue, and medical transport, ensuring rapid and efficient response across the state.

Under the contract, Toll Group will partner with a range of expert subcontractors, including the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Australia/Northern Territory) and Gunggandji Aerospace through iDiC, to provide Airborne Law Enforcement (ALE), Search and Rescue (SAR), and Medical Transport (MT) services.

The contract includes key milestones, with the Initial Operational Capability for fixed-wing services scheduled for November 2026, and the Full Operational Capability for rotary-wing services set for October 2027.

**SA Police Fleet: Rotary-Wing:** Two Bell 429 helicopters configured to support Airborne Law Enforcement missions, capable of high speeds of up to 287 km/h and range of up to 593 km supporting rapid deployment and response. Toll have confirmed that the 429s are "factory new" and the 139s are "low time 7T examples" without being more specific, and politely said they would not take further questions on the aircraft sourcing. [Parapex Media] . [this is an extended repeat of the information appearing on page 3 of this edition]

**LIFE FLIGHT:** Leonardo has announced a further growth in presence of the AW139 intermediate twin-engine helicopter in Australia, with orders for four more aircraft by LifeFlight and joint venture partner StarFlight as they celebrate 10 years of successful cooperation with the operator since it received its first AW139 in 2015. The new helicopters will be used to carry out emergency medical service, law enforcement, oil and gas operations and search and rescue response missions in Australia, with deliveries expected to be completed in 2027. It will make the combined LifeFlight and StarFlight AW139 fleet one of the largest in Australia.

Established in 1979, LifeFlight has an advanced fleet of rotary and fixed-wing jet aircraft with highly trained medical teams and is a globally recognised training academy and Approved Maintenance Organisation. StarFlight, a subsidiary of Fox Group Holdings and LifeFlight, delivers world-leading, law enforcement and defence, and emergency coordination aviation services

## THAILAND

**AIR AMBULANCE:** A company called Thai Air Ambulance in Thailand are advertising for additional staff for their new service. They have bought a Pilatus PC12 N125LE, had a Spectrum Aeromed EMS interior installed and it has a pending registration to HS-AMB

The main staff need is for a Sales and Marketing Officer to promote the availability of the aircraft to the travel agency sector and other likely markets. Applicants need to be either at or within easy reach of Don Mueang International Airport.



## UKRAINE

**THE TRUMP EFFECT:** Outraged by Donald Trump's showdown with Volodymyr Zelenskyy, thousands of Czechs have opened their wallets in record numbers, sending millions to support Ukraine's fight against Russia.

The surge in donations began in mid-February, but spiked dramatically after Trump's public criticism of Zelenskyy and his heated exchange with the Ukrainian leader in Washington.

One of the biggest beneficiaries has been "Gift for Putin", a Czech initiative that raises funds for military aid to Ukraine. The campaign has now raised over €2.9M, enough to purchase a Black Hawk helicopter for Ukraine.



The Czech Republic has become the first country in the world whose citizens crowdfunded a military helicopter for Ukraine and extra funds will be used to transport the UH-60 Black Hawk to Ukraine, which is in desperate need of modern air support.

Since its inception, "Dárek pro Putina" has organized public collections to procure weapons and other essential materials for the Ukrainian military and civilian defence efforts. Past contributions have facilitated the purchase of an RM-70 multiple rocket launcher, named "Přemysl," for 50 million koruna, as well as a T-72 Avenger tank for 30 million koruna.

The initiative has also supported non-military aid, such as flood relief efforts following the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine. [Defence Blog]

## UNITED KINGDOM

**NATIONAL:** Air Ambulances UK has announced the successful relaunch of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Air Ambulances (APPGAA), reaffirming its commitment to advocating for the lifesaving work of air ambulance charities across the UK.



Back: Pictured left to right: Jamie Ward AAKU, Graham Leadbitter MP SNP, Pippa Heylings MP Liberal Democrats, Claire Young MP Liberal Democrats, Glen Picknell AAKU, Liz Jarvis MP Liberal Democrats, The Rt Hon. the Baroness Foster of Aghadrumsee DBE, Jim Shannon MP Democratic Unionist Party Front: Left to right: Steve Witherden MP Labour, Lindsay Boswell, Interim CEO AAKU

The meeting was chaired by Steve Witherden MP, the APPGAA brings together politicians to address key issues affecting the sector. The gathering marked a significant step towards raising awareness and campaigning on policy issues within the air ambulance sector to enhance the delivery of lifesaving pre-hospital care.

During the meeting, Pete Wishart MP (Scottish National Party) was reaffirmed as Chair, and new officers, Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst MP – Officer (Conservative), Steve Witherden MP – Officer (Labour) and The Rt Hon. the Baroness Foster of Aghadrumsee DBE – Officer (Conservative) were appointed to support the group’s work:

The meeting set out the group’s aims and objectives for the coming year. A key topic on the agenda was hospital helipads, a significant challenge facing the sector. Plans were discussed for Air Ambulances UK to employ a helipad specialist to assess the impact, compile a report to support APPGAA lobbying efforts, and provide clear evidence to the Government on return on investment. [www.airambulancesuk.org](http://www.airambulancesuk.org)

EAST ANGLIA: Last month the East Anglian Air Ambulance released their financial statements for the year to June 30, 2024.

Income is reported to be up 2.0% to £18.975M, with expenditure up 6.8% to £17.887M giving them an operating surplus (including investment gains) down 12.4% to £1.634M. This still leaves the with Balance Sheet funds of £32.427M at the end of the financial year.



LONDON: The MD902 Explorer previously used by the London Air Ambulance charity as G-EHMS has been sold and has now left the UK for operations in Austria with Heli-Austria OE-XKM. The helicopter was noted leaving Gloucester / Staverton Airport on February 25 still in the basis red of the London HEMS but minus the titles. [MJ]

SCOTLAND: Noted arriving at Gloucester / Staverton Airport March 20 2025 was Airbus H145 helicopter G-NSCA on delivery. It landed at 6.55pm from Southampton / Eastleigh Airport & taxied to Babcock using its registration as a callsign inbound .

It is destined to join the SCAA service in Scotland as an air ambulance helicopter later this year [MJ].

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## UNITED STATES

FLORIDA: Health First air ambulance are now basing a second EC135 helicopter at its new northern operation base at the Space Coast Regional Airport in Titusville.

First Flight 2 doubles the air ambulance service coverage for Brevard County and northern Indian River County on Florida's Atlantic coast. A partnership with Metro Aviation has been in place for more than three decades.

Both helicopters are staffed with highly trained professionals – including the pilot and two medical crew members – a Registered Nurse Paramedic and a critical Care Paramedic.

Health First sees to meet a growing demand from Brevard County residents, businesses, visitors and daily passers-through who are boosted in numbers by a busy cruise liner port. And with four Health First hospitals in Brevard County – including Cape Canaveral in the north, Viera a Level II trauma centre Holmes Regional in Central Brevard, and Palm Bay Hospital in south Brevard, patient transfer can be less than 30 minutes to any location.

First Flight now operates out of Melbourne Orlando International Airport and now Titusville, enabling the to effectively support a wide range of emergencies. [Space Coast Daily/FirstFlight/Metro]



©Health First



From left to right, the First Flight team includes Paramedic David Rodriguez-Wells, Pilot Kevin Mills, Health First Director of Patient Logistics Tiffany Bassani, Paramedic Dakota Martinez, Flight Nurse Ronald Watson, and Flight Nurse Prudence Meads. (Health First image)

HAWAII: The Daniel R. Sayre Memorial Foundation, Inc. has signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Life Flight Network, LLC to expand air medical services in Hawai'i. This collaboration represents a significant step toward enhancing emergency medical response and ensuring critically ill and injured patients have access to timely, lifesaving care.

To support this initiative, the 'Foundation has collaborated with key donors to bring a new Airbus H145 helicopter to the County of Hawai'i, fully configured as an air ambulance. Over the past year and a half, the 'Foundation has engaged consultants and explored air ambulance companies to operate the Airbus H145 helicopter. After significant due diligence, and ensuring mission and cultural alignment, Life Flight Network was chosen to take the vital next steps towards setting up the operation.



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INDIANA: Last month Leonardo and Parkview Health announced the execution of an option for a second AW169 helicopter with delivery expected in the second quarter of 2026, further strengthening the Parkview Samaritan critical care transport program after the first AW169 entered service in 2024.

Parkview currently operates two American Eurocopter AS365N2 Dauphin medical helicopters from bases in Fort Wayne (Samaritan 1) and Rochester, Indiana (Samaritan 2). A Leonardo AW169 is being added to replace Samaritan 2 in Rochester and the current Samaritan 2 will become Samaritan 1, based in Fort Wayne. While no longer in regular service, the current Samaritan 1 will remain available to be used as a backup.

Over the last 36 years, Parkview Samaritan teams have transported (by air and ground) more than 35,000 patients in need of emergency care. This acquisition will allow Parkview to complete the replacement of its AS365 fleet, ushering in an all-new era of advanced medical

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**MASSACHUSETTS:** Last month Loft Dynamics announced the worldwide release of its highly anticipated Airbus H145 VR simulator—the first-ever VR flight simulator for this widely used rotorcraft. Designed to support the demanding training needs of H145 operators across air ambulance, law enforcement, and military missions, the new simulator provides a high level of accessibility, realism, and efficiency.

Loft Dynamics also announced that Boston MedFlight, the largest critical care transport provider in the northeastern United States, is among the first operators in the world to sign a letter of intent to integrate the VR H145 simulator into its training program. The organization plans to install the state-of-the-art VR simulator at one of its four Massachusetts bases.

The Loft Dynamics H145 VR simulator features:

Real-world flight dynamics with a six-degrees-of-freedom full-motion platform that replicates all haptic sensations—such as sling loads, runway texture, and force feedback from flight controls.

A full-scale replica cockpit with a 360-degree panoramic view, providing precise visual cues both inside and outside the aircraft.

A full-body pose tracking system, allowing pilots to see their exact hand and body movements in real time within the VR environment.

AI- and machine learning-powered performance tracking, which objectively captures and measures pilot core competencies across manoeuvres and scenarios and provides data-driven feedback to optimize training.

Customizable scenarios and environments, enabling pilots to train for real-world missions in conditions such as Night Vision Goggles (NVGs), Whiteout/Brownout scenarios, and the FAA- and EASA-qualified HESLO training simulation.

Virtual demonstration mode (LofTWIN), which digitizes flight instruction from world-renowned pilots and operator instructors, transforming it into an immersive VR experience that is accessible anytime, anywhere, ensuring consistent and precise training.



The H145 simulator is now available for order.

A nonprofit organization founded in 1985, Boston MedFlight has transported more than 100,000 patients, including over 6,000 patients in 2024 alone. The organization provides comprehensive medical transport services by air and ground to patients in New England and beyond. Boston MedFlight works in close partnership with local and regional healthcare systems to ensure timely access to high-quality and specialized care. Operating as mobile intensive care units (ICUs), all Boston MedFlight vehicles—including its fleet of seven helicopters, a jet, and nine critical care ambulances—are equipped to provide advanced life support and critical care during transport.





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OHIO: The Cleveland Clinic is getting three new medical transport helicopters with advanced safety features that expand their ability to transport patients in bad weather, along with other improvements.

The new five-bladed Airbus H145s helicopters are quieter during take-off, approach and landing; give off fewer carbon dioxide emissions, and have quicker start-ups for faster deployment.

The first of the new Black blue and green H145 helicopters, N971CC, started operations last month. Two additional helicopters will arrive in the next few months. They will replace the existing Sikorsky S-76 helicopters to provide care to the residents of Northeast Ohio.

## FIRE AUSTRALIA

QUEENSLAND: One of the rarer types appearing at Verticon (aka Heli-Expo) Dallas this year was the Bell 214ST. Back in the mid-1980s the type was used by the police in Oman to transport their officers to remote outposts, today it is a utility type with more limited uses in putting out fires.

Its presence in the Dallas show was to mark an intention for it to become the latest legacy helicopter to go back into production to address global shortfalls in rotary-wing firefighting capability. The price of the type will be far more attractive than new build production from other long cabin types including the Bell 525 and Sikorsky S-92.

Australia's McDermott Aviation, based in Queensland, owns the type certificate to the twin-engine, 8-metric-ton helicopter, and was floating plans to produce new-build versions of the rotorcraft. It will be powered by either the General Electric CT7/T700 or Safran's Aneto turboshaft. McDermott currently owns all 24 of the remaining operational 214STs of the 85 that were built. It has been using them on firefighting contracts, most notably in Greece, where the company had 14 aircraft deployed last year.



As part of the development work, McDermott's engineers have already shaved weight from the aircraft, getting the empty weight down to 4.1 metric tons. The company is also working on increasing maximum gross weight to 8.2 metric tons.

The 214 can carry passengers – taking fire fighters to the site of the fire – a capability that its closest competitor, the DoD surplus Black Hawk, lacks because of the restricted category that prevents passenger carriage.

The Bell 214 airframe at Dallas was N724HT 28175 [© Helian]

It is hoped that the first batch of six new aircraft could be made available by 2026 using existing transmissions and equipment. Sales of those aircraft would then support new production and building afresh. [TO/ Helian]

## SOUTH KOREA

FOREST SERVICE: The fire season is well underway in South Korea and so far deaths have passed 24 persons.

Eight Russian helicopters out of the Korea Forest Service's fleet of 48 used in firefighting had been taken out of operation since last year due to an inability to import parts from Russia because of sanctions related to the Ukraine war.

A spokesperson for the Korea Forest Service, said the agency planned to secure more wildfire-fighting helicopters. Currently 4,919 firefighting personnel were being deployed, including hundreds of police officers and military units, while 87 helicopters were being used. So far one helicopter crash has been reported.



Smoke and flames rise from a wildfire in Andong, South Korea.. (Yonhap via Reuters) [CBC]

## SEARCH & RESCUE

### NEW ZEALAND

**SAR SERVICES:** New Zealand's Search and Rescue Services (SRSL) has placed an order for four Airbus H145 helicopters to bolster its emergency medical services (EMS) operations.

The state-of-the-art helicopters will join SRSL's existing fleet of H145 and BK117 aircraft, further enhancing its ability to serve communities across the country.

### UNITED STATES

**ALASKA:** Leonardo and the North Slope Borough (NSB) of Alaska announced the entry of two new AW189 super medium helicopters. The aircraft, outfitted with specialized EMS interiors, are set to significantly elevate the capabilities of the North Slope Borough's Search and Rescue (SAR) and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) across its expansive 95,000 square-mile service area, located entirely above the Arctic Circle. The helicopters will replace the Borough's current helicopter fleet and operate continuously, day and night, to perform essential missions.

The AW189 helicopters feature advanced Full Icing Protection Systems (FIPS), are designed to withstand the unforgiving Arctic climate. This capability guarantees safe and reliable operation in extreme conditions, in-



cluding heavy ice and snow, even when winter temperatures plunge to a staggering -40 degrees Fahrenheit. Combining these sophisticated technologies and mission capabilities ensures that the NSB can provide timely and effective responses to emergencies in this remote and challenging environment, ultimately enhancing the safety and well-being of the communities it serves. [Leonardo]

## UNITED KINGDOM

You have to laugh—or else you would cry. The latest from Stop the boats fits in well for April 1 “All fools day.” Small consolation perhaps that the latest intelligence suggests that the small boat migrants are all arriving with wet feet. Another way of looking at that is that the migrants are therefore being given new dry shoes.

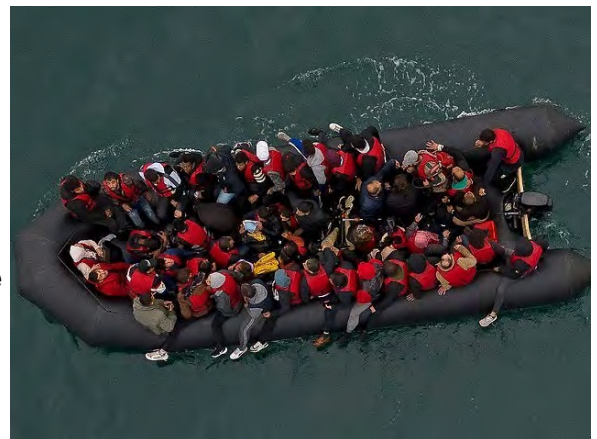
### CHANNEL REPORT

Despite all the rhetoric, from politicians on both sides of the English Channel, in the UK and in France, the number of illegal migrants crossing the Channel in small boats have continued to increase. These are the same migrants who are ‘rescued’ mid-Channel by the UK Border Force and the volunteers of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, before being landed in England, at Dover. After a slow start in January and February, the result of the adverse, winter weather, the numbers then increased in March; as the weather improved the numbers, predictably, went up! Before the end of March the total, for the first quarter of 2025, increased to 6,642, a new record. More migrants have been landed at Dover within the first 3 months of 2025 than in any previous year since the first 299 migrants crossed the English Channel in 2018.

### INCREASING NUMBERS

This year, up to and including the 29 March, the total number of illegal migrants landed at Dover by the UK Border Force was 6,642. In the first quarter of 2022, the record year when the annual total was 45,774, the number was 4,548. In 2023 it was 3,770 and in the first 3 months of 2024 it was 5,435. The increase in numbers in the first quarter of this year, 1,207 more than in the same period in 2024, is despite the fact that some 50 days were lost due to adverse weather. When the wind, mid-Channel, was reported to be in excess of 10 knots. The death toll of those migrants trying to cross the Channel in a large, overloaded, unseaworthy inflatable boat in 2025 currently stands at 10, according to the French authorities. The number of migrants reported to have perished whilst attempting to cross the Channel in 2024 was reported to be 78.

**In the first 3 months of 2025 more illegal migrants have crossed the English Channel in small boats than in any previous year. The death toll this year is reported, by the French authorities, to be 10.**



### NEW INITIATIVES

During the same period, in the first quarter of 2025, the British Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP visited France, in February, to meet her French counterpart, the Minister for the Interior, Bruno Retailleau. This visit resulted in a new, three point plan to ‘smash’ the organised criminal groups (OCGs), those criminals responsible for sourcing inflatable boats, together with outboard engines, from China, before charging the hapless asylum seekers, many from safe countries, including Albania, Egypt, Pakistan, Romania, Turkey and Vietnam, an exorbitant fee for smuggling them into the UK; a precursor to modern day

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slavery. The supply of flat-packed inflatable boats, together with outboard engines, made in China and entering Europe through Turkey, would seem to be inexhaustible. This is despite occasional reports of the police in Belgium, Germany, and France disrupting the illegal supply chain.

**The British Home Secretary, Ms Yvette Cooper MP visited Calais and Le Touquet in February to support the launch of new police and enforcement initiatives in France.**



To call this activity, 'people smuggling' is a bit of a stretch when the cross-Channel route has the overt support of the UK Border Force. Border Force vessels meet the migrant boats in mid-Channel, before landing their passengers in England. The alternative would be to 'rescue' migrants at the earliest opportunity, in French waters, before returning them to France! If the new plan works and the irregular migrant route across the English Channel is closed, then the migrant camps, those make-shift camps which blight the French countryside between Calais and Dunkirk, will have no purpose and they too will then be closed, forever.

In a recent report, the independent inspector of immigration and borders, David Bolt, said that it is vital for the UK Border Force to invest in staff, in detection equipment and in IT systems, to counter 'organised facilitations' and 'opportunistic jump-ups'. The report also highlights the fact that some migrants still attempt to enter the UK covertly by leaving French territory by ferry and via the Channel Tunnel, although the majority, over 6,000 in the first quarter of 2025, crossed English Channel by boat. The reason why some migrants still try to pass the enhanced security at the ferry ports of Calais and Dunkirk and at the entrance to the Channel Tunnel at Coquelles is, most probably, the exorbitant fee charged to secure a place on a boat. Nevertheless, there is, by comparison, a lack of security on the isolated beaches of northern France.

**With the cross-Channel route closed the make-shift migrant camps which blight the French countryside, near Calais and Dunkirk, will be closed too.**



The new three point plan includes:

1. A new intelligence and police unit at Dunkirk to speed up the arrest and the prosecution of people smugglers.
2. A new 'Compagnie de Marche' of specialist enforcement officers, supported by an increase in local policing, with new powers to address the increase in violence on French beaches.
3. The training of additional drone pilots to increase operations to intercept boats, before they reach the sea, together with additional French reservist officers patrolling the transport routes leading to the French coast

In addition, a new, positive recommendation by the French Minister, Bruno Retailleau, is to lift the ban on the French police intercepting migrant boats at sea. The French minister is reported to be seeking to change the law to counter a new tactic, by the OCGs; the deployment of so called, 'taxi boats'. Those boats which run close inshore, parallel to the coast to embark migrants from the sea, thereby avoiding the police on land, those police officers tasked with patrolling the beaches which extend for over 80 miles between Dunkirk and the Baie de Somme. In the 10 weeks, 6 January to 16 March 2025 the UK Home Office reported that the French police had failed to prevent any migrants from leaving France in an inflatable boat.

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The French Interior Minister, Bruno Retailleau has plans to counter the 'taxi boats' which avoid the police patrolling the French beaches, by embarking migrants from the sea.



## CONCLUSION

Although the new Anglo-French initiatives are most welcome, the truth is that in the first 3 months of 2025 the number of illegal migrants, those entering the UK by irregular routes, have gone up, not down! Whilst these new initiatives, targeting the beaches of northern France, the point of departure from France to the UK, are well intended the additional French police patrols will still have to be at the right place and at the right time! This will require persistent air patrols, with light aircraft, between Dunkirk and the Baie de Somme. The alternative, drones, those unmanned aircraft that must be operated within sight of the operator on the ground, simply lack the required range, the speed and the flight endurance to patrol 80 miles of coastline.

If the French police wish to be at the right place at the right time, then the French beaches, those between Dunkirk and the Baie de Somme, will require persistent air patrols in good weather, the same good weather that favours the OCGs when planning their Channel crossings using large, unseaworthy inflatable boats.



To accomplish the persistent air patrols of those beaches used by the people smugglers, the OCGs, the French police will, most probably, require additional support from the 'voluntary sector'. Those volunteers with light aircraft, those who fly Cessna's and Piper's, together with similar aircraft, would become a 'force multiplier' supplementing the infrequent, the irregular patrols that are currently flown by the French Police Aux Frontiere. This may require a volunteer air corps, or, better still, a joint Anglo-French volunteer air corps, the equivalent of the Swedish Volunteer Air Corps, the FFK, which supports the civil authorities and the Armed Forces in Sweden. This will permit more regular, more persistent 'line patrols' along the beaches of northern France, in good weather, the same good weather which favours the OCGs, those planning cross-Channel crossings in large, unseaworthy inflatable boats.

James A Cowan MBE

Note: 1. The author, a former member of the Royal Air Force, a former maritime reconnaissance pilot, is also a former police pilot and former air ambulance pilot too.

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# INDUSTRY



Last month **Airbus Helicopters** introduced its new H140 at the annual vertical lift industry show Verticon in Dallas, Texas. Airbus claim that the multi-mission helicopter raises the bar in the light twin-engine category, for performance, cost-effectiveness, and passenger and crew comfort. The H140 is a 3-tonne class rotorcraft that complements Airbus Helicopters' current light twin offering for the emergency medical services, passenger transport, and private and business aviation markets. The entry into service of the helicopter is planned in 2028 for the emergency medical services segment.

The new helicopter draws upon the extensive research undertaken in the research programmes including Bluecopter to work hand in hand with H135 customers to bring their additional requirements together in the H140's efficient design. It enables customers to benefit from a bigger mission-enhancing cabin space that was sized to an optimised engine performance for the best-in-class payload and range.

Although the development of this new design has already entered the flights stage – there being plenty of over the fence images of prototypes flying in recent months – the Company presented a full-scale model in an emergency medical services configuration at Verticon.

The H140 features a wide range of innovations, including a new T-shaped tail boom with an optimised Fenestron that reduces sound levels, a five-blade bearingless main rotor, and new powerful engines. The helicopter also features a larger cabin space, large windows and optimised cabin layout that can accommodate up to six passengers comfortably. Designed with accessibility in mind, thanks to the large clam-shell doors and the high tail boom, the H140's rear loading capabilities allow the use of different types of stretcher systems including intensive care ones and transport incubators while its large sliding doors facilitate access to the cabin.

The new H140 also features the same five-bladed rotor system that was introduced on the H145 in 2019. The bearingless main rotor design simplifies maintenance, improves serviceability and reliability, and provides the highest level of passenger and crew comfort. H140 operators will benefit from an optimised maintenance plan that harmonises airframe and engine maintenance schedules and allows longer intervals between inspections, reducing the helicopter's operating and maintenance costs. In total, the company will have four dedicated prototypes, with the first aircraft already being flight tested at the company's site in Donauwörth.

The H140 will feature Helionix, Airbus Helicopters' avionic system that also equips the H135, H145, H160

and H175. Helionix, in addition to the 4-axis autopilot, offers an innovative cockpit layout to enhance situational awareness, reducing the pilot workload and increasing the safety during the mission

The announcement was followed by a flurry of orders including the air medical community in Europe ADAC Luftrettung, ÖAMTC Flugrettung Air Methods, Global Medical Response, Metro Aviation and STAT MedEvac in the USA.

The announced sales on the launch day alone only served to confirm the supreme position of Airbus in the market place and yet deliveries are years off. Meanwhile the H140 announcements were associated with further orders for the H135 and H145 that will be maintaining the fleets in the meantime.



**Safran Helicopter Engines** has been selected by Airbus Helicopters to power their H140 helicopter. The new helicopter will be powered by the 700 shp power class Arrius 2E, the most advanced model of the Arrius family.

The Arrius 2E benefits from innovative technologies developed on the Arriel 2E and Arrano 1A engines (respectively powering the H145 and H160 helicopters) improving its operability and competitiveness. A redesign of the hot section allows an additional 10% of power compared to previous generations of the Arrius 2 engine. A dual-channel FADEC<sup>1</sup> with a state-of-the-art engine control system offers reliability and availability. The Arrius 2E also features additive manufactured parts, including the HMU<sup>2</sup>, decreasing the overall weight of the engine while increasing the performance of this key equipment.



The Arrius 2E benefits from reduced operating costs and a light maintenance schedule displaying a TBO<sup>3</sup> of no less than 5,000 hours at entry into service. Subsequent enquiries of Airbus suggest that there are no current plans to offer an alternative power plant.

**Gama Group Limited** (“Gama Aviation”) and Leonardo announced a further reinforcement of their collaboration in delivering and maintaining advanced rotorcraft capabilities to UK with an order for five more helicopters for emergency medical service (EMS) and Energy support operations. The announcement was made during Verticon 2025.

The contract includes three AW169 light intermediate twins with skid undercarriage and the 5.1t Increased Growth Weight (IGW) configuration for EMS and two AW139 intermediate twin engine helicopters for off-shore transport missions. Deliveries are expected to be carried out during 2027 and 2028. The agreement supports Gama Aviation and Bond Helicopters roadmap towards a gradual modernization of the UK fleet as well as targeting strategic opportunities in the UK and Europe.

The parties have also defined an agreement that allows Gama Aviation to purchase additional AW169s and AW139s over the next five years in conjunction with a collaboration to further maximise the maintainability and mission effectiveness of the Gama Aviation and Bond Helicopters fleet.

This AW169 order marks the entrance of the 5.1t skidded variant of the type into Europe and the first in the global EMS market. These AW169s will be delivered in a baseline configuration for Gama Aviation to install their new in-house EMS interior and innovative patient loading system. Gama Aviation’s fleet in-

cludes seven AW169 EMS helicopters – making it the leading operator in UK – in addition to providing management and maintenance services to AW169 VIP

**Leonardo** announced further growth within the commercial helicopter market, with new orders for nearly 30 helicopters of various models to several operators across Europe, Americas, Africa and Asia-Pacific primarily for energy support, rescue and public service duties, VIP transport operations. Combined orders for the AW109 GrandNew, AW169, AW139, and AW189 types have a total value of approximately 370 million EUR, with deliveries between 2026 and 2028. These orders add to preliminary sales contracts for 15 AW09 next-generation single-engine helicopters for European and Southeast Asian customers. Moreover, Leonardo also announced the entry into new markets, particularly supporting the energy industry and rescue missions with the AW169 and AW189 and the latest simulation technologies for pilot training, including the VxR virtual and extended reality pilot simulator.

At the Dallas show, **Bell Textron Inc.**, announced that Air Methods has signed a Master Purchasing Agreement for up to 27 aircraft, including fifteen IFR-configured Bell 407GXis with an option to purchase an additional twelve aircraft in the future. This agreement comes on the heels of Air Methods' recent signed purchase agreement for a Bell 429.

Bell and **Omni Helicopters International Group** (OHI, Omni), Latin America's leading air mobility solutions provider announced a joint offshore operational evaluation program for the Bell 525 helicopter, to be conducted over several months at Omni's high-tempo operation in Georgetown, Guyana, pending type certification.



Following type certification, Bell will operate the Bell 525 helicopter in collaboration with Omni to undertake a program of offshore mission flights. The helicopter will be loaded to representative mission weights and will be fully integrated into the daily flight planning processes and flight schedule. The helicopter will visit multiple offshore installations in the region and will be loaded, unloaded and refuelled routinely to subject it to a sustained trial under actual field conditions.

Around 500 hours of flying is planned over a 6-month period after which Bell will hopefully get its trouble child into service with an operator.

The **European Aviation Safety Agency** (EASA) has officially awarded Type Certification to the P2006T NG (Next Generation)—a milestone that redefines excellence in the twin-engine aircraft category.

Fifteen years after its initial debut, the P2006T continues to evolve, setting new benchmarks in efficiency, technology, and performance. With hundreds of units in operation worldwide and continuous enhancements based on real-world operator feedback, the Next Generation P2006T is designed to surpass even its own legacy.

The P2006T NG integrates cutting-edge advancements to meet the demands of flight schools, private owners, and special mission operators.

Compared to the P2006T Mk II the P2006T NG has an increased Maximum Take-Off weight to 1290 kg (2844 lb), allowing a greater payload.

Equipped with fuel-injected Rotax 912iSc3 engines, the P2006T NG is in fact the world's most fuel-efficient twin-engine aircraft. It consumes as little as 14 litres per hour (3.7 USG/h) per engine, reducing CO emissions by up to 45 metric tons per year—a breakthrough in environmentally conscious aviation. The P2006T NG introduces a totally redesigned cockpit, featuring a central console designed to accommodate an FMS GCU477 keyboard, enabling smooth control and entry of all Garmin G1000Nxi avionics. The fully digital, 3-axis GFC700 autopilot with ESP (Electronic Stability and Protection), coupled with the GI-275 stand-by instrument, enhances flight precision, while the innovative Garmin Flight Stream system ensures total connectivity between tablets, smartphones, and the aircraft.

The P2006T NG is available in a Special Mission Platform (SMP) configuration, with certified power box and hatches, supporting a wide range of applications, including SAR, reconnaissance, border patrol and mapping.

Canadian avionics manufacturer, **Anodyne Electronics Manufacturing Corp.** (AEM), has launched a brand-new version of its fully customizable P139-HD Digital Audio System.

The P139-HD Compact Digital Audio System's form factor makes it suitable for aircraft with a fewer number of mission radios and for operators who may require a space-saving solution.

“Our customers need flexible and customizable solutions, so we are extremely pleased to add these two reduced-depth control panels and compact router options to our digital audio system,” says Steve Broderick, AEM Sales and Business Development, Special Mission Communications. “These fully capable, but smaller system products fill a gap that many operators have been looking for when designing and configuring their audio systems.”

The new system is made up of the G13116R and G13115R audio control panels, and the G13000R system router. The new control panels and router can be integrated into an existing P139-HD Digital Audio System or be used as a standalone system.

In addition to its compact size, the system's controllers have integrated Bluetooth® modules, which enhance the overall system's audio capabilities and expand connectivity to existing avionics, audio, PA, or loudspeaker systems.

AEM's P139-HD Digital Audio System is perfect for special mission operators and integrators who need clear, mission-ready digital audio. Designed in consultation with completion centres, technicians, operators, and Tactical Flight Officers (TFOs) in the aerial law enforcement and air medical transport sectors, this system is the industry's most capable, flexible, and practical digital audio system for special role aircraft. Call the AEM sales team at 1-888-763-1088 or email [sales@aem-corp.com](mailto:sales@aem-corp.com) to learn more.

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The H125's single pilot instrument flight rules (IFR) capability has been certified by the **U.S. Federal Aviation Administration** (FAA), paving the way for first deliveries in 2025 from Airbus Helicopters' assembly line in Columbus, Mississippi. This new feature, developed in collaboration with Moog's Genesys Aerosystems, consists of an upgraded cockpit and a new autopilot along with redundant hydraulic and electrical systems.

IFR capabilities will allow pilots to operate the aircraft more safely in low visibility and challenging weather conditions, thanks to advanced avionics and autopilot. The system offers advanced situational awareness and reduces pilots' workload for operations, all while maintaining the flight capabilities that have made the H125 the undisputed leader in the light single-engine segment for its unrivalled power, safety, versatility and manoeuvrability.

More than 4,300 H125/AS350/AS355/Ecureuil/AStar family helicopters are flying across the globe in the most demanding conditions. The H125 is the absolute market leader in the intermediate single-engine helicopter category, achieving a market share of around 80% in 2024. In 2024, the family celebrated 40 million flight hours and 50 years since its maiden flight.

**Hartzell Propeller** has been awarded STC approval for its Tanis Helicopter Preheat Systems for Airbus H135 helicopters. Approvals cover the United States and the European Union (including EC135T1, EC135T2, EC135T2+, EC135T3, EC635T2+).

Hartzell Propeller offers Tanis preheat systems for numerous piston and turbine powered airplanes and helicopters. In addition, the company offers Tanis avionics/cabin preheaters and replacement parts and accessories.

Hartzell Propeller's entire preheat product line contributes to aircraft longevity, reliability, safety, and the ability to perform protected engine starts in colder weather. The Tanis brand utilizes silicone pad elements to provide heat to critical components such as engines, gearboxes, hydraulics, avionics and batteries.

<https://hartzellaviation.com>.

In a continuation of the story run in last months PAN, **Vodafone Group Plc** (Vodafone) (LSE: VOD), a leading European and African telecommunications company, and AST SpaceMobile Inc. ("AST SpaceMobile") (NASDAQ: ASTS), the company building the first and only space-based cellular broadband network accessible directly by everyday smartphones, designed for both commercial and government application, have signed an agreement to create a jointly-owned European satellite service business ("SatCo") to serve mobile network operators (MNOs) in all European markets.

SatCo will seek to provide 100% geographic coverage in every part of Europe to give consumers and businesses access to secure space-based cellular broadband connectivity via their MNO.

The new venture will exclusively distribute AST SpaceMobile's satellite services to European MNOs under a single turnkey arrangement. This will be underpinned by a full network management and network operations centre capability, based in Europe, drawing on Vodafone's advanced engineering expertise. SatCo will build and run a network of ground stations to provide backhaul services from these MNOs across Europe to the satellite network in low Earth orbit.

SatCo's solution will fully support European digital sovereignty. AST SpaceMobile's satellites already operate as remote radio heads where the core network capability remains with the MNO. SatCo builds on this by providing fully sovereign backhaul capabilities under Vodafone co-ownership, with European headquarters and management.

Margherita Della Valle, Vodafone Group CEO said: "Vodafone's space-based mobile broadband will mean our customers can stay connected, wherever they are. Our new satellite company will be able to offer this pioneering technology to other European mobile operators through a turnkey service that combines Vodafone's leading network and engineering with AST SpaceMobile's 'antennas in the sky'."

In late January 2025, Vodafone successfully made the world's first space-based mobile video call from an area without any mobile coverage on the recently launched BlueBirds satellites, supporting the company's aim to provide ubiquitous mobile coverage for its 340 million customers in 15 countries and its network partners in 45 more markets.



Vodafone is spearheading the introduction of commercial space-based mobile broadband connectivity across Europe during 2025 and 2026.

Operating from low Earth orbit, AST SpaceMobile is the only satellite technology in the world today that will offer mobile broadband directly to multiple 4G or 5G smartphones without the need of any specialized software or device support or



**Meeker-Airfilm** has been granted an FAA STC for MD369/MD500 dual side mount. The new version is milled from a solid billet of metal and can carry a maximum weight capability of 135 pounds. The new mount was displayed at last months Verticon in Dallas. Meeker



Rounding off National Police Staff week in the United Kingdom, the National Police Chiefs' Council and College of Policing hosted the inaugural National Police Staff Awards established to recognise the significant impact that police staff have in policing and celebrate where that work is helping to deliver policing priorities.

Police staff from across the country were honoured at a special awards ceremony held at the Senior Police Staff Network (SPSN) conference with over 1,100 nominations across seven award categories including ones recognising bravery and lifetime achievements. The Home Secretary the Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP presented the award for the inaugural Police Staff Team of the Year. This was awarded to the police staff who responded after the tragic events in Southport in July 2024, and who would go on to provide vital support to the community in the days and weeks to follow. The Home Secretary said it was a privilege to attend the awards.

ACO Gemma Stannard, Head of the NPCC's Strategic Hub, and ACO Alexis Poole of Devon and Cornwall Police are co-founders of the SPSN. They said they had created the awards to recognise the members of police staff who had gone above and beyond in support of their communities. A full list of award winners is available on the [NPCC website](#).

*Editor: Its nice to feel wanted, a piece of paper goes a long way.*



Robinson Helicopters has unveiled a new concept in helicopters from the Robinson factory. Well known for its two and four seat craft it has now taken a leap forward into the ten seat market. There have been rumours and that led to some pretty outlandish drawings appearing, but the final product looks the part and could start to steal sales from the existing line-up of emergency services helicopters.

The new 10-seater single-engine R88 helicopter designed and fabricated in Torrance, California, aims to capture the utility market from foreign (as in 'non-American') manufacturers.

There have been several leaks on how the new helicopter might look but it was finally revealed on the eve of the Verticon (formerly known as Heli-Expo), event in Dallas, Texas. This is the first new Robinson's in almost 15 years.



With a launch price starting at \$3.3M, the R88 offers two pilot seats followed by two rows of four passenger seats, all inside a cavernous 275-cubic-foot (7.8-cubic-meter) cabin volume.

Powered by the 1,000-shaft-horsepower Safran Arriel 2W, the R88 has a payload capacity of up to 1,800 pounds (815 kilograms) with full fuel, and a range of 350 nautical miles (650 km), with endurance above 3.5 hours.

The new helicopter might present itself as a low price alternative to the Airbus Helicopters H130 but Robinson are also going for the rough end of the market to face such tasks as firefighting and HEMS.

The size of the design has altered many of the typical Robinson features, the type still has a two blade main rotor but the chord of the blades is larger and the teetering cyclic has had to go. The single engine is a grown up design from SAFRAN and Garmin are providing the glass cockpit and avionics suite, including large G500H TXi displays and GTN navigators with touchscreen controls. The R88 will have a four-axis autopilot as standard, along with data recording with datalink and a HUMS.

Robinson expects to have the first R88 flying this year or perhaps early in 2026 with certification set for 2029.

**Leonardo** AW09 next generation single engine helicopter's market footprint continues to expand with further demand and distributors reinforcing their commitment with new preliminary sales orders as the program development makes progress.

Helitech Asia PTE LTD, based in Singapore, was appointed AW09 distributor in 2023 for Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam—markets with robust interest in the AW09. Having initially committed to 10 preliminary sales contracts in 2023, Helitech has signed an additional 10 to meet rising customer demand, as the first 10 units have already been allocated to end users.

Kaan Air, a long-term Leonardo distributor for the AW119Kx, AW109 family, AW169, AW139, and AW189, has extended its Distributorship mandate to the AW09. Following this appointment, Kaan Air is adding five more preliminary sales contracts in response to growing interest from Turkish operators, bringing its total commitment to 10 units.

Meanwhile, Synerjet, an established Leonardo distributor for the AW119Kx, AW109 series and AW169 in Colombia, Peru, Chile, Ecuador, and Paraguay, has now been appointed as the official AW09 distributor



for the same countries. Synerjet has already signed preliminary sales contract for five units in 2024. As the AW09 development advances, the aircraft continues to generate strong interest from operators worldwide. Rotorcraft companies and private operators highly welcome the AW09 for its performance, versatility, and cutting-edge design - marking a significant evolution in the single-engine helicopter segment. The total number of preliminary sales for the AW09 is now nearly 130 units globally.

In recent months, several milestones have been achieved during the developmental activities such as completing engine icing tests in collaboration with Safran, progressing the bird strike compliance demonstration by successfully completing another shot in the second most critical location of the windshield, finalizing all fatigue tests for the main and tail rotor blades, and achieving the first engine start of the Tie Down Helicopter with the track and balance of the main and tail rotor blades. As the industrialization of the AW09 begins, the first serial aircraft (P6) has now entered the Final Assembly Line at Vergiate, Italy, marking another major milestone in type development.

*Editor: Meanwhile, at the Yeovil, Somerset factory in England the company have been working on a military unmanned craft, Proteus, that bears a remarkable resemblance to the original Kopter design including the fan in rotor that (until Kopter came along) was a feature that was avoided due to potential Airbus/Fenestron copyright problems. Could it be that the pressures of a seemingly impending war promoted this version to the front of the development queue?*



**Global Medical** might well be in line for the Airbus H140 when it is ready but meanwhile at the Verticon it took delivery of the first of its sizeable order for IFR configured Bell 407GX<sub>i</sub> helicopters. They signed for additional airframes at the AMTC event in November last year and some 24 are on order – bumping their overall fleet to 250 Bell helicopters. With operations established in all 50 U.S. states and internationally, Global Medical Response plans to use the new aircraft fleet to extend its reach even further.

**Metro Aviation** is set to deliver the first EMS-configured Airbus H160 in the United States, with plans to secure a Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) by the first quarter of 2026.

The H160 is already in service worldwide in various configurations, including commercial passenger transport, public services, and private aviation. Designed for both comfort and efficiency, the aircraft features a spacious cabin and enhanced cockpit visibility, significantly improving situational awareness for pilots. The new aircraft is scheduled to arrive at Metro's facility this summer for completion.

Meanwhile Metro Aviation is a launch customer for the highly anticipated H140, a groundbreaking aircraft in the H135 series that is poised to redefine HEMS.

For the past several years, Metro Aviation has worked closely with Airbus and its team in Germany, following along with the certification process to develop the most advanced and efficient emergency medical services (EMS) interior tailored specifically for U.S. operators. Making use of its extensive experience in medical transport solutions, Metro has played a key role in ensuring the H140 is not only state-of-the-art but also optimised for lifesaving missions.



Behind the scenes, Metro's engineering team has been diligently working on an EMS interior in preparation for the aircraft's certification. This effort underscores Metro's proactive approach to staying ahead of industry advancements and seamlessly integrating new technologies into its fleet.

Metro see the H140 as a disruptive element in the air medical sector, it will answer many requests from customers and partners. The introduction of the H140 will mark a significant milestone for both Metro Aviation and the industry as a whole.

**Helicopter Institute (HI)** announced a new partnering agreement with Airbus Helicopters to offer its own Beyond Factory Training for the AS350 B2 and B3 models. This agreement also includes Night Vision Goggle (NVG) training, providing pilots with comprehensive instruction to enhance operational safety and proficiency.



Under this partnership, training will be conducted at Helicopter Institute’s headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas, utilizing HI’s fleet of aircraft. Additionally, off-site training will be available at customer locations, using their own AS350 helicopters. All training provided within the scope of this agreement will be officially recognised as Airbus Factory Training, ensuring pilots receive the highest quality instruction tailored to Airbus standards.

The agreement represents many years of working with Airbus customers and gaining the confidence of the AS350 community in the quality of training offered. [info@helicopterinstitute.com](mailto:info@helicopterinstitute.com) [www.helicopterinstitute.com](http://www.helicopterinstitute.com)

**Boost Systems** is strengthening its support for utility operators by becoming the Exclusive Representative for Canada and USA of the Cloudburst Fire Bucket which comes from IMS New Zealand Ltd, based in Napier.



Since its introduction in 2005, the Cloudburst Fire Bucket has been continuously refined to uphold its reputation as a firefighting solution. Constructed from durable urethane and featuring a “failsafe to open” monsoon valve, capable of multi drop applications, while incorporating options for shallow-fill pumps and foam bladders.

Boost is looking forward to supporting North American operators and expanding the deployment of Cloudburst Fire Buckets across Canada and the USA.

For more information, visit [www.boostsystems.com](http://www.boostsystems.com), email [info@boostsystems.com](mailto:info@boostsystems.com), or call 1-888-851-4014.





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# ACCIDENTS & INCIDENTS

**31 January 2025 Airbus 125 N853MB** Air ambulance of Med-Trans Corp suffered a bird strike on climb-out from Greeley County Airport, Greeley, Colorado, USA. Returned to land with damage to main and tail rotors. Grounded until March.

**12 February 2025 Bell Huey II PR-COE** of the Polícia Militar do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, hit by bullets during an armed conflict with criminals on the ground. Pilot performed an emergency landing near Penha, Rio de Janeiro. No reported injuries and the helicopter received minor damage. [Parapex Media]

**14 February 2025 Bell 407 CC-CXT** owned by Aeromax Helicópteros operated for CONAF hit by ground fire while filling up water bucket in the hover at near Collipulli, Malecco, Araucania, Chile. Minor damage only, helicopter landed safely [Parapex Media]

**5 March 2025 Bell UH-1D LV-IUH** Fire fighting helicopter owned by Helicópteros del Pacífico Argentina SA departed La Cruz airport on a positioning flight to a fire at Ituzaingó, Corrientes Province in Argentina. The pilot reported issues with the aircraft controls and alighted in a field at San Martín, Ituzaingó, Corrientes Province where it caught fire and was destroyed. The pilot suffered minor injuries. [ASN]

**10 March 2025 Eurocopter EC135P2+ N835CS.** Air Ambulance operated by Med-Trans for the University of Mississippi Medical Center AirCare flying from Aberdeen to Columbus-Golden Triangle Regional Airport, Mississippi crashed into a heavily wooded area south of the Natchez Trace Parkway, where the Pearl River joins the Ross Barnett Reservoir, Madison, killing three crew, named as Jakob Kindt, 37, a critical care paramedic for AirCare; Dustin Pope, 35, a base supervisor for AirCare; and Cal Wesolowski, 62, a pilot. They were assigned to AirCare 3, one of four medical helicopter units operated by the medical facility and were based in Columbus, Mississippi. [ASN]

**10 March 2025 Bell 412 VH-VJF** Firefighting helicopter operated by Coulson Aviation using a sling loaded water bucket. The Australian Transport Safety Board (ATSB) is investigating a control issue event 57 km north-east of Strahan Aerodrome, Tasmania. The helicopter was hovering to load the bucket from a river, the helicopter unexpectedly sank about 50 ft. In an attempt to recover, the pilot initiated forward flight but was unable to jettison the load before the longline became taut, causing a sudden stop and an abrupt tail-down motion. This resulted in the external hook and longline making contact with the lower fuselage. The pilot flew back to the base at Zeehan where inspection identified damage to the helicopter's fuselage, control tubes for both the engines and the tail rotor. Damage was also identified to the bucket and longline. [Stewart Kedar ABM12600, Australia]

**20 March 2025 helicopter (AgustaWestland Koala?)** Aeropolice Service helicopter from the Civil Police's Special Resources Coordination, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The civil police officer Felipe Monteiro, 45, was flying over Vila Aliança, a slum on the west side of the city, when gang members opened fire on the aircraft he was co-piloting and he received a head injury. The authorities were conducting a raid operation against a criminal group specializing in van thefts in the western region of the Brazilian city. He was taken to a local hospital. Local media reported that the officer was in critical condition, but police haven't confirmed that. The other pilot was uninjured and the police helicopter, which was providing air support, didn't crash. Suspects commonly fire at police helicopters during such operations but there have been no recent reports of related injuries. [G1].

**21 March 2025 MD530F 0209** Kurdistan Police, Iraq. Aircraft operating from Sulaymaniyah International Airport (ISU/ORSU). operated by the Peshmerga Air Support unit, crashed in mountainous terrain of the Peramagroon Mountain, near Sulaymaniyah. The crew was rescued. [ASN]

**25 March 2025 Mil Mi-8MTV-1 RA-22257.** Air ambulance of National Air Ambulance Service of Russia. snow removal equipment damaged the main rotor blades of the Mil helicopter of JSC National Air Ambulance Service at the Khalaktyrka airfield in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Russia, during work to clear the area. There were no passengers or crew members on board. There were no casualties.

**26 March 2025 Sikorsky S-76B HL9313** Air Palace Co Ltd firefighting for Forest Service of South Korea. The pilot was killed when the helicopter crashed into trees while on a fire fighting mission while trying to extinguish a blaze Gyoan-ri, Sinpyeong-myeon, in the county of Uiseong,. [China Daily]

## SAFETY

A helicopter crash that resulted in the death of a pilot who was helping to fight Alberta forest fires in 2023 was caused by engine failure, the Transportation Safety Board said in a report released last month.

The 41 years old pilot was the only person on board the Bell 205A-1 helicopter when it plummeted into the forest floor on July 19, 2023, about 110 kilometres northeast of Peace River.

The helicopter operated by West Kelowna, British Columbia's Valhalla Helicopters Inc. that was equipped with a specialized suspended water bucket.

Investigators found that engine failure occurred moments after liftoff and the pilot lost control as the aircraft's water bucket became entangled in the trees.

The pilot informed the dispatcher that he was returning to the firebase due to an unspecified issue with the aircraft.

The helicopter began a 180-degree turn to the right as it continued to lose altitude, before completely losing engine power. The pilot began to autorotate into a nearby patch of muskeg.

During the final moments of the emergency descent, the pilot managed to release the bucket's long line, striking a foot pedal that activates the aircraft's manual release mechanism.

Seconds later, the helicopter crashed, striking the ground nose-down.

The investigation found that a manufacturing defect in the engine's air diffuser created a localized failure that progressively led to the engine failure.

An examination of the engine, completed by TSB officials as part of the investigation, determined that a defect in a braze bond within the mechanism had weakened over time.

The result was a loss of clearance of many rotating parts within the engine. Bearings within the diffuser mechanism had failed and the compressor rotor had made contact with the power shaft.

The cockpit voice recorder (CVR) failed to record before and during the January 31 crash of a medevac Bombardier Learjet 55 in Philadelphia and may not have recorded on any flights for several years, according to the preliminary NTSB report released last month. After departing Northeast Philadelphia Airport the Learjet went down approximately one minute after take-off, killing all aboard, both pilots, two medical crewmembers, two patients and one person on the ground. Four people were seriously injured and 20 more sustained minor injuries. The crew did not make any distress radio calls during the flight.

The CVR was recovered from the initial impact crater under eight feet of soil and debris and was sent to the NTSB Vehicle Recorders Laboratory in Washington, D.C., for processing and readout.

Both the impact and water caused significant damage to the CVR. The laboratory repaired the device and discovered that nothing had been recorded during the flight, and "it was determined that the CVR had likely not been recording audio for several years."

## UNMANNED

Potentially coming to the market this summer is an outdoor drone event in the UK that the organisers hope will catch the imagination of the industry.

Scheduled for July 1-3 is **Drone-Zone Expo 2025**. Being launched as an inaugural outside flying drone event at Yarmouth Heliport, Norfolk. This is being marketed as the UK's first ever outdoor trade and industry drone exhibition in the east of England. The organisers hope that it is going to be a busy 'must be there' event focussed on industry rather than the enthusiast.

The hosts are Yarmouth Heliport, also known as North Denes, which is an active airfield with frequent light fixed wing and rotary flights operating alongside drones.

The organisers are interested in any additional proposals to exhibit at the event, which is targeted at the professional market where weight, flight duration, 3D printing, safety with intelligent use of counter-measures, and capability of service delivery are the focus parameters.

They have planned for up to 189 flying slots being available across the three days, and have up to 194 stand spaces for potential exhibitors drawn from the 'best in class' drone companies and their suppliers. They envisage exhibitors promoting individual platforms, software, engineering, flight services, Cameras, thermal heads, training and counter-measures.

Drone Zone will be offering streaming of each flight demonstration on a live feed (for those who would like

it) giving the option for presenters in the Speakers Corner area (Hangar 1) to talk through sorties taking place outside.

A quirky add-on to the speakers event is to offer the audience the option to vote for the best speaker of each day – the prize being a flight in a 1943 de Havilland DH82A Tiger Moth. The organisers have access to two of them. This is an appropriate offering as the 1935 de Havilland DH82B Queen Bee was one of the first drones – or more exactly an Unmanned radio-controlled target drone. I understand that the Tiger Moth flight comes with a real pilot!

The organisers vision is to create a drone environment where the market can take value from their presentation, they wish to avoid repetitive draining costs. [www.drone-zone.co.uk](http://www.drone-zone.co.uk)



*Editor: The venue is a grass airfield with two runways and a hardstanding with several helicopter spots left over from the days the location was an important base for Bristow and CHC in the early days of gas and oil. CHC pulled out of the heliport in 2015.*

*There are other drone venues in the UK including the indoor Drone X show at ExCel in London's Docklands in September. In recent times that has not featured any flying demonstration options. The same applies at such as the Emergency Services Show where drones are a tiny part of the exhibits. Nominally there are drone flying venues promoted in Wales but the main one ParcAberporth launched in 2006 has remained very much an aloof venue attracting customers with aspirations more befitting their manned helicopters.*

Another drone related event is set for London in April. **The RAeS Remotely Piloted and Autonomous Aircraft Systems (RPAAS) Conference 2025** will be held over two days on April 23-24 at the Royal Aeronautical Society Headquarters.

A pay for entry event the RAeS Remotely Piloted and Autonomous Aircraft Systems (RPAAS) Conference will be both on-line and in person.

The Conference will look at the unique challenges that integrating RPAAS into civilian airspace presents, how can we navigate the evolving regulatory and air traffic management (ATM) environments and ensure economic viability, crucial for widespread adoption.

Experts will discuss and explain the obstacles currently hindering progress, exploring practical solutions to overcome them and pave the way for broader integration of drone technology.

Getting into the event, after you have made your way to Central London, will cost RAES Members £395 in person or £295 on-line (each plus vat) and the fees for Corporate Partners and non-members are significantly more. Check out the website [www.aerosociety.com](http://www.aerosociety.com)

The UK **Civil Aviation Authority** will take on a new role to monitor and enforce new product standards for drones in the UK, improving safety and supporting the sector's further growth.

From the start of 2026, drones operating in the Open Category – which covers low-risk drone flights and leisure activities - will be subject to product standards under a framework known as 'Class Marking', improving the safety and security of the sector.

The MSA will be responsible for ensuring required standards for drones are met by manufacturers, as well as importers and distributors, and intervening when there is non-compliance. It means drone users will have more confidence that drones they purchase are safe and comply with safety standards.

*Editor: It looks like there is design creep of ever more rigorous regulation of parts and materials used coming over the next year. Taken to the same level as manned aircraft it might mean that your backyard designers will either have to up their standards or depart the business. Where a manned aircraft is built using parts AID approved hitherto the home drone industry has not been so constrained. The difference in price between an approved nut and bolt and those more recently allowed of the drone developers can be massive. This may severely constrain the economics of the drone going forward.*

Australian aerospace start-up Drone Forge and Airbus have signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) to collaborate on the deployment and operational integration of the **Flexrotor** uncrewed aerial system.

This agreement, which includes the acquisition of Flexrotor systems, marks a critical step towards transforming uncrewed aviation with game-changing solutions and technologies tailored for tactical operations.

As part of Drone Forge's portfolio expansion, the company has established a UAS service centre in Perth, Western Australia, to provide training, maintenance and support services for a range of UAS including the Flexroto

The Flexrotor, is Airbus' newest addition to its UAS portfolio. A modern Vertical Take-off and Landing (VTOL) uncrewed aircraft with a maximum launch weight of 25 kg (55 lbs), it has been designed for ISTAR missions for more than 12-14 hours in a typical operational configuration. It can integrate different types of payloads including an electro-optical system and advanced sensors to suit customers' unique mission needs. With the ability to autonomously launch and recover from either land or sea requiring only a 3.7 by 3.7 m (12 by 12 ft.) area, the Flexrotor is ideal for expeditionary missions requiring minimal footprint. Through the support of the US Department of Defence (DoD), and contracted deployment in a variety of maritime security exercises, the Flexrotor is a mission-proven, force multiplier for operations in harsh, high-threat, GPS-denied environments.

The Flexrotor is also being operated for parapublic missions such as forest fire surveillance (providing firefighters with critical images day or night) and can address other demanding mission needs, including ice navigation (helping guide naval vessels through ice in the Arctic ocean), law enforcement, and border patrol.



If you think you have seen it before you may be showing your age. 25 years ago there was a massive beast from Canadair—similar idea but very heavy and noisy.

## PEOPLE

Airbus Helicopters in the UK confirms that Managing Director for the last three years, Lenny Brown MBE, has decided to step down from his role effective 17 March to pursue a new opportunity.

Lenny has been powerfully instrumental in shaping the direction and success of the company, and Airbus sincerely thanks him for his leadership, vision and commitment. Richard Atack, currently Head of Customisation Centre, will be stepping into the role of Interim Managing Director, effective 3 March. The announcement of the permanent successor will be made in the coming months.

His Majesty the King has approved the appointment of a new Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Kathryn Stone OBE will be primarily responsible for the inspection and other work of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) for forces and services in Wales and the Western region. Wider portfolio responsibilities will be confirmed in due course.

Kathryn brings a wealth of experience from her previous wide-ranging roles, most recently as Chair of the Bar Standards Board and a non-executive member of the Board of the Crown Prosecution Service. Prior to this, she has held positions including the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, the Chief Legal Ombudsman for England and Wales, and Commissioner at both the Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland, and the (then) Independent Police Complaints Commission.

## MOVE ALONG THERE

The unprecedented 2-day closure of London Heathrow airport (LHR) on March 20 will not have escaped many – especially those who set off for LHR only to be turned around back to the point of departure or found themselves landing hundreds of miles away from their planned destination. The basic cause was a major power outage and fire in the oil cooling jacket at the electricity sub-station that serves LHR.

But there was a little humour mixed in with the understandable widespread anguish.

It is not clear which comedian set up the Right Honourable Ed Miliband MP the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero to deal with the press and TV coverage.

This is the man who is dedicated to closing down UK oil and gas wells and converting the UK to Net Zero (wind and mostly China supplied solar power) by 2030.

Contemporary critics have labelled his efforts as divisive, dangerous and deranged, but clearly someone in government added up electric (or the lack of it) and burning oil and came up with Miliband as the answer.

Meanwhile the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, when questioned about the Heathrow fire was quick to point out the pollution caused by the raging oil fire and yet failed to balance that observation with the questionable positive green aspect that some 1,400 polluting flights a day were no longer taking place! Some people are never happy.

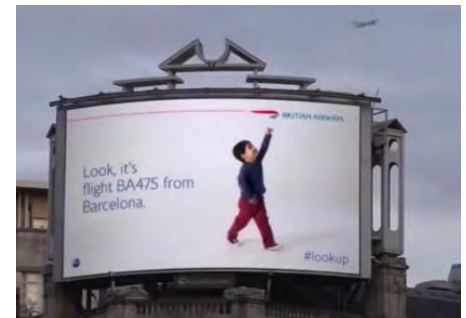
## HISTORY DISTORTED

Over in the USA the Associated Press obtained a database of tens of thousands of Department of Defense website images that have been flagged for removal, or already removed due to having content that highlighted diversity, equity or inclusion. Images highlighting female service members' contributions have been removed as have images highlighting Black, Hispanic and Pacific Islander contributions to the military, among many others. The database AP obtained contains 26,000 images that were flagged — and they may only be a fraction of all the content that is being removed under a strange edict that no doubt a future administration will rescind.

Photos seemed to be flagged for removal simply because their file included the word "gay," including service members with a family name of Gay as well as the Boeing B-29 aircraft that dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima (Enola Gay) - that event certainly had no link with being or feeling gay.

Eventually the deletions from the database are expected to exceed that 26,000 total by a wide margin.

It is difficult to keep up with world events at the moment. The new US President, Donald Trump, is difficult to keep up with in what seems to be a new world order that might be some sort of Pax Washington. Politicians around the world are in a frenzy changing their social and green plans over to rearmament in the



face of the largely unknown. Is it Russia, China, the USA or some as yet undeclared foe?

America, from being a largely benign ally of all that the West reputedly stands for has become the unexpected threat to its near neighbours Canada, Greenland and Mexico and that is before he single-handedly sorts out the Ukraine war!

I am not sure that for those in Ukraine being invaded by the gold diggers of the new Holy Empire of the USA is that much different from being battered daily by Russia.

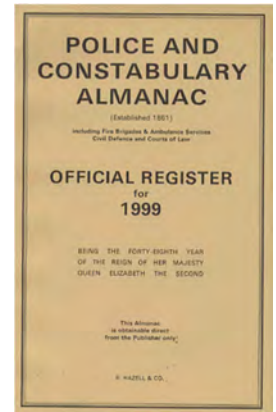
Time will tell I guess.

The questions have been asked but, so far, no-one has answered. If there is a 20% tariff on goods crossing the US/Canada border how does that effect the ultimate cost of the new Bell helicopter? A significant amount of the production of Bell helicopters is in Canada with completions in Texas. Similarly there are tariff questions over the engines and parts for the most popular helicopters in the USA with French (SAFRAN) and Canadian (PWC) engines and helicopter parts constantly crossing borders in the manufacturing process. I guess it will take some time to take that all on board. Life is never that simple.

And it is not just the USA that seems to be in a state of confusion. Over here in the UK, last months Society of Editors conference, revealed that the relationship between the police and media has not improved much in the last 12 months. This is despite a report last year setting out simple ways it could and should get better. Well it seems no one in the National Police Chiefs Council bothered to read that tosh! I am not sure that they actually read anything much.

The Internet has consigned the printed *Police and Constabulary Almanac* into being collectors item sitting a musty corner of a museum, never to return.

It is said that Sir Andy Marsh, the CEO of the College of Policing was on a panel with journalists and he was firm in his view: "You can't have trust if you can't communicate." And that starts with having a phone number for the press office on every police force website. [Catherine Levin, Editor of Emergency Services Times].



## O'DONNELL FORGOTTEN

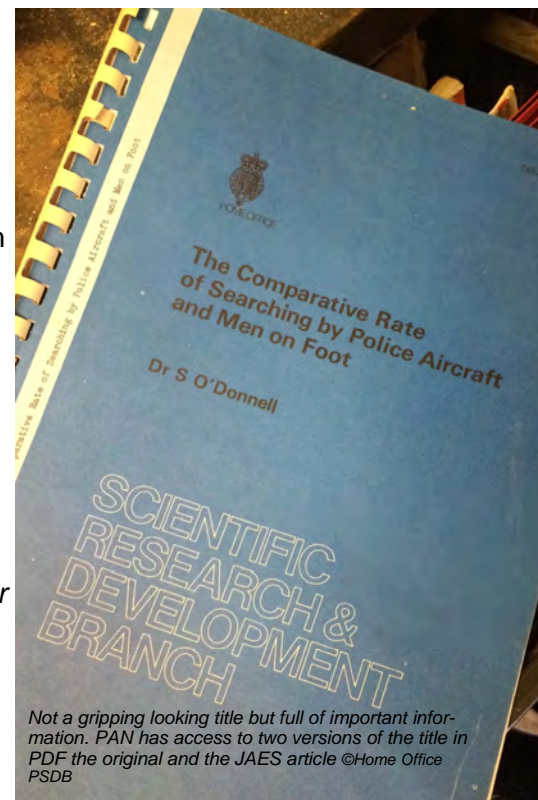
Ah yes, reading, it is becoming a lost art unless it is on a screen somewhere. It appears someone has lost the bible of searching. When police air search was in its infancy many trials were undertaken by or on behalf of the Home Office to quantify the best ways to operate. Unfortunately the best of these reports is now, at best, faded from view simply because it was produced in 1988. Every UK police unit and library had a copy but it is no stand out item and easily overlooked. It is unlikely that anyone from a modern drone unit, let alone a decision maker in a control room, has ever read it.

Home Office Publication 9/88 written by a member of the Home Office PSDB is titled "The Comparative Rate of Searching by Police Aircraft and Men on Foot" By Dr. S O'Donnell Scientific Research & Development Branch. 13 pages. © Crown Copyright 1987

It is available in dusty corners of police headquarters or as a PDF download from either of the *Police Aviation News* websites. The report proves that aerial search is both cheaper and more efficient than search on foot.

*Editor: Perhaps The O'Donnell Theory is in someway linked to the following story of a search where a 'proper' air search was forgotten and replaced by drones and the long proven to be inefficient search on foot. There must be a suspicion that the manned search by a helicopter was deferred and deferred as every other resource in the force was thrown at it until in a last desperate effort NPAS were called. It seems that Durham Constabulary are refusing to say where and under what circumstances the lifeless body of Jenny Hall was found. All we know is that the police helicopter from Newcastle found her in a morning sortie four days after she was reported missing. The coroner's enquiry into her death may be interesting. Let us just hope it is not another horror story of an opportunity missed. People will NOT understand.*

*Far too many times police forces across the UK are being over reliant upon their drones in 'life or death' searches. Not enough people in positions of power are standing back and assessing the relative capabilities of manned and unmanned aircraft. As O'Donnell demonstrated in*





1988, in daylight, a set of human eyes in the sky is the ideal solution and usually outperforms even the most sophisticated camera easily. Yes it is history (and therefore its probity is discounted) but it has been proven correct time and again.

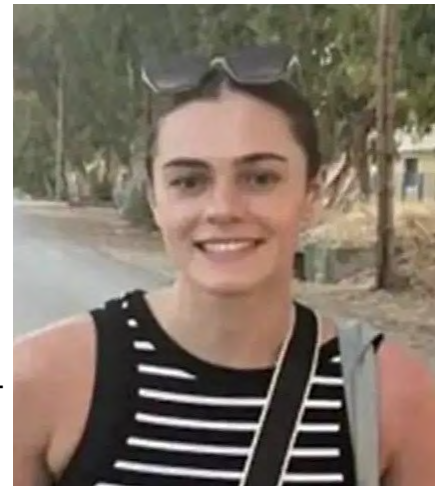
Read on.....

## FIVE DAYS IN FEBRUARY - THE SEARCH FOR JENNY HALL

Durham Constabulary, in the North East of England, reported that, *“We’re sorry to report that officers’ searching for missing woman Jenny Hall, have sadly found a body. The body was found in a very remote area in Teesdale just after 9.30am today, Sunday, 23 February.”*

**Jenny Hall was reported as missing from home, by her parents, on the evening of Tuesday, 18 February**

Jenny Hall, 23 years was last seen at her home at Barracks Farm, near Tow Law in County Durham, on the afternoon of Tuesday, 18 February. Her parents reported her as missing on the evening of the same day. On the morning of the next day, Wednesday, 19 February, her car, a red Ford Focus, was found by the police on the B6278, a high level road, 2,000 feet above sea level, which crosses a remote area of open fells between Eggleston in Upper Teesdale and Stanhope in Upper Wear-dale, some 7 miles to the west of Tow Law.



**Ms Hall’s car, a red Ford Focus, was found on the B6278, a high level route, 2,000 feet above sea level, crossing open fells between Eggleston and Stanhope.**



Above: Contemporary photo of the car. ©DP

Left: Later aerial photograph of the area. ©NECAP

## THE LARGEST SEARCH IN COUNTY DURHAM

These events precipitated the largest search for a missing person in County Durham in recent years. A Coastguard search and rescue helicopter conducted a search of the open ground, between Eggleston and Stanhope after Jenny's car had been found. In addition the local mountain rescue team, the Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue Team (TWSMRT) was deployed. This, local team of volunteers was joined, according to Durham Constabulary, by an additional 14 MRTs, all volunteers, from Cleveland, Northumberland, Cumbria, Yorkshire and Derbyshire. However, the leader of the TWSMRT, when interviewed by the local press, emphasised that they were supported by 7 other MRTs, plus specialist units from a further 10 teams. According to the leader of the TWSMRT, the search covered an area of 100 square kilometres (40 square miles) between Eggleston and Stanhope, with 25 square kilometres, Hamsterley Forest searched intensively. The search involved search teams on foot, search dogs, off-road motorcycle and drones.



**An area of 100 square kilometres (40 square miles), a large, open area, devoid of trees, was searched using police teams, mountain rescue teams, off-road motorcycles, search dogs and drones.** [AP]

### SEARCH AREA

On Thursday, 20 February the police officially announced that Jenny's car had been found the previous day, on Wednesday, 19 February. They also asked 'well meaning' members of the public to stay away from the search area, between Eggleston and Stanhope, due to the severe, cold weather. It was also announced that Jenny was a keen, long distance runner and, as a consequence, the search area had been widened, using special police teams, expert mountain rescue teams, off-road motorcycles, search dogs and air support. The latter is believed to be a reference to the Durham Constabulary drone unit which has a number of DJI M30T and M2EA unmanned aerial vehicles. Apart from the search by a helicopter belonging to HM Coastguard on the morning of Wednesday, 19 February, there's no mention, by the police, of searches by other manned aircraft, including those aircraft, fixed-wing and helicopters, belonging to the National Police Air Service.

**The main search area, an open fell covered in deep bracken, is bisected by the B6278, between Eggleston and Stanhope, the road where Jenny Hall's car was found, on Wednesday, 19 February. A search on foot is both difficult and time consuming too.** [AP]



Unfortunately, neither the Coastguard SAR helicopter, nor those aircraft belonging to NPAS have yet been equipped with the mobile telephone location system, 'Artemis' which turns mobile 'phones, those that are switched on, into a rescue beacon. This permits a missing person to be quickly located. Whether Jenny Hall was carrying a mobile 'phone and whether it was switched on has not been confirmed.

**Police drones, together with drones belonging to the mountain rescue teams, were used to search for Jenny Hall** [DP]

On the third day of searching, on Friday, 21 February, the focus of the search was shifted to the nearby Hamsterley Forest, the largest forest in County Durham covering approximately 8 square miles. The forest, full of forest trails, is an area popular with walkers, fell runners and off-road cyclists. Chief Inspector Dean Haythornthwaite of Durham Constabulary stated, *"We have become increasingly concerned for Jenny since she was reported missing on Tuesday.....We are asking 'well meaning' members of the public to allow the expert officers with a structured search plan, with specialist equipment, to allow them time and space so that they can do what they need to do."* The search remained focussed on Hamsterley Forest on the following day, Saturday, 22 February, the fourth day of searching.



**Hamsterley Forest, County Durham's largest forest, approximately 8 square miles, is criss-crossed with forest trails, popular with walkers, fell runners and off-road cyclists.** [©NECAP]

### THE AIR SEARCH

The body of Jenny Hall was not found until the morning of Sunday, 23 February. According to Durham Constabulary, *"In a very remote area of Teesdale."* At the time of writing, the public had not been informed of where Ms Hall was found, or who found her; the police, a mountain rescue team, or a member of the public?

Aircraft, in particular drones, those which have to be flown within sight of the ground based operator, have limited utility as a search vehicle in area which is densely forested. Moreover, in other, more open areas, it is a manned aircraft, an aeroplane or a helicopter (not a drone which must be operated within visual line of sight of the operator on the ground) which can search a large area, very quickly. Also, the airborne observer has the advantage, over a ground based search party, of viewing the ground from above; the proverbial 'birds eye' view!

Would Jenny Hall have been found more quickly if more aircraft had been deployed to the search area, including aircraft flown by volunteers belonging to the local civil air patrol? In the right circumstances, at sea, but also in an open area devoid of buildings and trees, the 'probability of detection' will, with a 'coverage factor' of one, or greater, increase from 80% to over 90% if the same area is searched 3 times, or more.

The questions that remain unanswered are, where was Jenny Hall found and who found her? Also, was she carrying her mobile 'phone and was it switched on? A final question; was Jenny Hall found in an area that was searched from the air and, if she was, was the area searched with a manned aircraft, or a drone, and was it searched more than once? Although this search failed to save Jenny Hall, there is an opportunity learn from this operation; to improve the planning and the execution of any future search. Particularly when a person is missing in a rural setting, in an area which is very large and also very remote.

Editors Note.

### O'DONNELL REVISITED

The search for Jenny Hall, which lasted 5 days and covered 40 square miles of open fells, also accounted for over 4,000 hours of volunteering, according to the leader of the local mountain rescue team. Additional volunteers were drafted in from mountain rescue teams in Cleveland, Northumberland, Yorkshire, Cumbria and Derbyshire.

Those familiar with, *'The Comparative Rate of Searching by Police Aircraft and Men on Foot'*, written by Dr S O'Donnell, and published by the Home Office in 1988, may reasonably question the deployment, or the lack of deployment, of aircraft during the search for missing person, Jenny Hall, in County Durham in February 2025.

The earlier trial, supervised by the Home Office Scientific Research and Development Branch, showed that when searching one square mile it would take men on foot 450 man-hours. However, an aircraft, aeroplane or helicopter, would be between 90% and 100% effective and would take between 12 and 20 minutes when conducting a visual search for objects which could be clearly seen from the air.

In the trial, on extensive heathland at Cannock Chase in Staffordshire, two aircraft belonging to the former police Midlands Air Support Unit, a Bolkow Bo105 helicopter and a BN Islander aeroplane, completed a visual search of an area of 1.3 square miles. The helicopter found all 9 targets in 17 minutes. The aeroplane found all the targets in 35 minutes. Each aircraft carried the pilot plus 2 police observers. In a smaller area, one third the size of the area searched by the aircraft, it took 12 police officers over 4 hours to search 30% of the smaller area. Nevertheless, all the targets were found in the area that was searched. The research team concluded that it would have taken 12 police officers 450 man-hours to search one square mile of heathland.

Apart from the Coastguard search and rescue helicopter, were any other manned aircraft, those belonging to the local civil air patrol, together with those aircraft belonging to the National Police Air Service (NPAS), aeroplanes and helicopters, requested to search for Jenny Hall? Or, on this occasion, was Durham Constabulary relying on the use of ground search teams, together with drones? Small, unmanned aircraft which must remain in sight of the operator on the ground. The same unmanned aerial vehicles which lack the speed, the reach and the flexibility of manned aircraft carrying observers equipped with stabilised binoculars, and, in the case of NPAS, aircraft that are equipped with electro-optical camera turrets, with powerful video cameras and thermal imagers.

James A Cowan MBE

Note: The author is a former member of the Royal Air Force, a former maritime reconnaissance pilot, a former police pilot, based in the North East of England, and a former air ambulance pilot too.



# EVENTS

Readers may recall that at the European Rotors event in November a new Bell Helicopter sponsored APSCON Europe event was scheduled for early June at the Bell Training Academy facility in Valencia, Spain. When it was found that this clashed with the regular date for the PAvCon Europe 2025 event discussions were held and the APSCON event was cancelled.

The latest on this is that the new event has been rescheduled to September 8-10 at the same Bell operated venue.

Although APSCON have been heavily involved in and supportive of the PAvCon Europe event for many years (effectively since 2006) they say they are excited to announce APSCON Europe 2025, as their inaugural stand-alone event in Europe.

The event is modelled on the safety seminars held in North America, will feature two and a half days of public safety air support unit training, a mini tradeshow of six-foot tabletop exhibits and ample networking opportunities.

Exhibitor set up will be on Monday, September 8, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, with exhibits open all day on Tuesday, September 9 and until noon on Wednesday, September 10.

Exhibitor registration for this event is now open through the APSA website. Visitor registration will be available from about May 1. The contact in Frederick, Maryland is Benay Osborne at [bosborne@publicsafetyaviation.org](mailto:bosborne@publicsafetyaviation.org), +1-301-631-2406.

*Ed: Although that original date in June was a problem because of its proximity this event is not a direct clash with PAvCon Europe, the police aviation conference, from its early days as the Airborne Law Enforcement Association (ALEA) the promoting organisation now has taken on a broader membership as APSCON and it covers a wider operator base across emergency services, firefighting, SAR and utility, areas where Bell have a local presence. Both have supported the police aviation conference for nearly two decades. It is worth noting that the Valencia event is on at the same time as the high profile, well established DSEi event at ExCel in London so they are taking on a potentially tough dateline.*



## APSCON EUROPE 2025

### SEPTEMBER 8-10, 2025 | VALENCIA, SPAIN

And there are other new events springing up around Europe all the time. Each might have their effect upon the market place if the industry takes the concepts to heart. Getting the date and the venue right is always a problem. We have seen them spring up and proper briefly before fading from view. Perhaps the most well known was/is Helitech which did well for some years culminating in Duxford before all but dying in the halls of ExCel. The drone element is about all that keeps it afloat.

This month there is news of a new Blue Light event at Olympia, London, and a drone event in Norfolk that hopes to attract police input and visitors. There are a number of other equally worthy start ups with grand names but as yet unproven market attraction.

**5 April 2025 - 6 September 2025.** Calm and Courageous The Second World War Home Front in Epping Forest District. Epping Forest District Museum, 39-41 Sun Street, Waltham Abbey, EN9 1EL, Essex UK. A free entry new temporary exhibition marking the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

There are links from the PAN websites to [www.efdmuseum.org.uk](http://www.efdmuseum.org.uk)

The main reason for this entry is that the museum has asked The Editor to provide Norwegian material for the exhibition and to give two talks on aviation subjects over the five months it is open.

**24 April 2025 Coptorz Innovation Day** – The future of drones is here! Walton View Hotel, Tong Ln, Bradford BD4 0SF UK. event showcasing the latest drone technology and how it's transforming industries like surveying & construction, asset integrity & inspection, agriculture, and public safety. Live demonstrations of cutting-edge drone solutions

- Expert talks from industry leaders
- Exclusive insights into the latest advancements
- Network with top suppliers, including DJI, Parrot, Flyability, Emesent, Phase One, and Anzu Robotics

**CALM AND COURAGEOUS**  
The Second World War Home Front in the Epping Forest District

5 April - 6 September 2025  
Free Entry

Epping Forest District Museum CIO  
39-41 Sun Street  
Waltham Abbey  
Essex EN9 1EL

A NEW TEMPORARY EXHIBITION MARKING  
THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF  
THE SECOND WORLD WAR

FIND US ON SOCIALS  
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Museum

**30 April 2025 , 7-8 pm Lippitts Hill Camp in War and Peace** an illustrated talk by Bryn Elliott at Epping Forest District Museum, 39-41 Sun Street, Waltham Abbey Essex EN9 1EL. In association with Police Aviation Research. Part of the Calm and Courageous temporary exhibition marking the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of the Second World War. [www.efdmuseum.org.uk](http://www.efdmuseum.org.uk) [enquiries@efdmuseum.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@efdmuseum.org.uk)

**14 May 2025 7-8 pm The Story of Aviation in West Essex** an illustrated talk by Bryn Elliott at Epping Forest District Museum, 39-41 Sun Street, Waltham Abbey Essex EN9 1EL. In association with North Weald Airfield Museum. Part of the Calm and Courageous temporary exhibition marking the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of the Second World War. [www.efdmuseum.org.uk](http://www.efdmuseum.org.uk) [enquiries@efdmuseum.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@efdmuseum.org.uk)

**15 May 2025 DUBAI WORLD POLICE SUMMIT:** Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the World Police Summit 2025 will return for its 4th edition from 13–15 May at the Dubai World Trade Centre. [www.worldpolicesummit.com](http://www.worldpolicesummit.com)

**9-12 April 2025 AERO Friedrichshafen,** Messe AERO Friedrichshafen is the global platform for all aspects of General Aviation – discover the variety of our industry in 12 exhibition halls and our static display ranging from Gliders, Ultralights, piston aircraft and helicopters up to Business Aviation. With more than 650 exhibitors from 35 countries, 35,000+ attendees and 500+ journalists from all over the world, AERO Friedrichshafen is the international community's annual meeting place.

**27-28 May 2025 PAvCon Europe** Le Castellet International Airport, prefecture of the Pyrénées-Orientales department in Southern France. A few kilometres from the Mediterranean Sea and the scrublands of the Corbières massif the busy business airfield, marketed as the gateway to the French Riviera, is at 3100 Route des Hauts du Camp 83330 Le Castellet, France [www.aeroportducastellet.com](http://www.aeroportducastellet.com) [www.pavconeurope.eu](http://www.pavconeurope.eu)

**18-19 June 2025 International Drone Show,** Odense, Denmark is hosted by Odense Robotics and UAS Denmark International Test Centre, which offers key testing facilities and BVLOS flights. Odense Robotics is co-funded by the Danish Board of Business Development, the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science and the European Union, as well as a broad range of projects and partnerships. Last time the event attracted 500 visitors. This year the expectation is to see growth to over 700. From Copenhagen airport you can take the direct train to Odense, without additional transportation or changing trains. 1.5 hours later you are in Odense. [www.internationaldroneshow.com](http://www.internationaldroneshow.com)

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