



Schiphol Amsterdam June 2019





[PAVCon Europe 4-5 June 2019](#)

Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Another PAVCon Europe successfully tucked away.

Despite a little organizational trauma along the way this one has picked up the accolade “Best ever” and not only for the lack of complaints from those taking part. It is fair to claim that a great time was had by all.

As ever, the thanks are all down to the stars of the show – the speakers – whether they are the veterans or new to the event. The speakers and presenters are the educators that everyone comes to see, closely followed by the chairman and support staff. They are all part of the whole.

Thanks to the enthusiasm of the participants in getting PAVCon to be the ‘Best of its type’ – even if that is pretty unique in Europe no matter how it is viewed. Due to a late change of venue from a capacious hangar to a bijou hotel meeting room, the event was crammed into a relatively small space but that gave it an added boost in that most presentations were visually to capacity audiences.

All the regular speakers excelled and even the many presentations most of us have heard before came across as crisp, newly updated and modern. Such is the format and the ever changing venues for the event across Europe, the numbers in the audience who have heard and seen it all before are very few.

Cramped conditions also affected the exhibitors but uniquely this year there has not be a single complaint about anything. The lack of space resulted in the numbers of exhibitors being guillotined towards the end and a number of prospective representatives of industry were obliged to resort to walking the show with their cards and brochures. Of the major manufacturers only Bell were able to get a space to call their own. Nonetheless Airbus, Bell and Leonardo were prime sponsors.

For many the event stretched through the first week of June with those involved arriving and leaving at different times. The real work started on the Monday with a training day held within the secure classrooms of the police air unit at Schiphol. The location required that it was exclusively an event for serving police

COVER: Netherlands National Police AW139 [File Photo Leonardo/Netherlands Police] Barely relevant to an event that was about aviation but did not rely upon the presence of airframes. This is though representative of our national hosts the Netherlands Police who welcomed the PAVCon Europe event to their country.
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officers. Although PAVCon facilitated the prime instructor attending from Texas that is the extent of its connection to the main event.

Away from the police facility Monday was also set-up day for the event at the hotel – the conference and the exhibition.

This year the event had John Osmond as an able new chairman replacing Gareth Davies after some twelve years. He is no stranger to the PAVCon formula, having taken on the role of regular speaker many times. A great replacement who has long understood the unique PAVCon formula of interaction of equals between the police as customers and industry as the supplier.

Mireille Lokhorst-Melchers, the Accountable Manager, Chief of the Aviation Police in the Netherlands for the last few years welcomed the gathered delegates and shared her thoughts on the role and industry in general. He joined the role without any significant aviation experience. She now has knowledge upon which to base her opinions.

For the next hour, and for a similar period on the following day, Bryan Smith the Safety Consultant for the Airborne Public Safety Association [APSA] talked flight safety. At the core of his and other presentations is crew members working together is flight safety and mutual cooperation to mitigate emergencies. The two successive days of a multi-faceted CRM/FRAT/SMS/IIMC presentations from experts in the field was well received.

We often question why the European police aviation community so readily embrace the arrival of American police aviators to tell them how to fly safely and efficiently. There are plenty of clever European police aviation professionals but, individual inclinations to perform aside, it has been difficult to get their employers to release them to be trainers. Each time we have to await them retiring from the police service – at which point their perceived credibility wanes.

The result is that the American's and other nations are welcomed.

On the technical side there is always a balance to be made between the critical advice on police air operations in the USA where they operate single pilot with a single Tactical Flight Officer [TFO] or another pilot and civil police air operations where many work twin engine aircraft single pilot with a TFO. Many in Europe have a focused belief that the second engine provides them with an automatic fly-away guarantee. For some the realization is dawning that when the engines share the same gearbox and fuel supplies that guarantee is flawed.

For the second year PAVCon was again able to welcome a number of officers from Turkish Police Aviation, who presented on human trafficking.

Updates on unmanned aircraft - drones and the like – where again the speciality of Dave Domoney the former Royal Canadian Mounted Police sergeant who developed drones for the police there. Canada is a massive remote country with a few aircraft and helicopters and for vast areas the only possible police aerial cover is the drone. This led to the country having the largest number of drones in police service and promoted options to undertake experimentation in the craft and how to stop them. The main thrust of this years presentation was outlining the measures to halt drones.

The following day drone use by the Netherlands Police and Military Services was comprehensively covered by Tjeerd Tiedeman, the Dutch Police UAV coordinator and a long standing military delegate attendee Haiko Kroeze.

The pair put to bed the prime reason why the Netherlands discarded the use of birds of prey in countering drones. For some time now it has been suggested that it was a bird safety issue but the real issue was the cost. Obtaining eggs to breed the birds was expensive, setting them up the cag-



es that were their homes and paying for their 24/7/365 , keep and training was equally prohibitively expensive. And to achieve what and when? It is clearly far more sensible to seek a technological answer that did not demand such close attention.



The first time in Europe trainer on the Monday was Lt. Clay Lacey of the Texas Department of Public Safety, Air Operations Division, in Dallas. The original sessions had taken all day but he gave a taster session to the attendees at large on the second day covering Crew Resource Management for Law Enforcement.

He brought to the event unique on-board EO/IR camera turret footage of a helicopter entering and leaving IIMC. The footage was timely in that the thrust of this years event was seeking means to train non-flying crew/TFO members to assist single pilots in time of emergency.

The footage was captured during an operational search in Texas. The helicopter was on the cusp of directing officers onto their target below when it was enveloped in mist and the scene below was lost. It was time for the aircrew to lift to safety. The unidentified male TFO can be heard to change his tone of voice from the authoritative gruff that had been directing colleagues to a new quieter and softer tone. Now the voice sought to quietly inform the pilot of height and speed until at last the obscuring mist passed from view.

Financial issues aside, I think that even the negative aspects of the event – the change in venue and lack of space - worked in the favour of this year's PAVCon and much of it due to the sterling efforts of the Renaissance Hotel staff who were themselves learning so much from this year's Conference and Exhibition event, the first since they opened last year.

Feedback from the hotel and staff is also important, they have consistently said they thoroughly enjoyed working with our crowd and would actually love to host us again. That is an accolade for everyone concerned.



One event that not on the script was the announcement by Dan Schwarzbach the CEO of the Airborne Public Safety Association [APSA] that the European event had won an award. It was a shock five minutes, but I consider that this is the recognition of the efforts of everyone concerned over the years – including many individuals no longer directly involved – in thrusting forward PAVCon for the greater good over the past decade and more. Nothing could have been achieved over the years without everyone.

I have already taken on board some of the content suggestions for next year but that is for honing in about 360 days time!

Thank you once again to all participants.

Aside from the technical details of ensuring that the conference attendees received a programme with an acceptable content and that the exhibitors gained an opportunity to speak to potential clients due acknowledgement is due to this years sponsors. This was probably the most sponsor supported PAVCon in a decade with each of the major airframe manufacturers playing a significant part. Thanks in particular then to Airbus Helicopters, Bell and Leonardo. The event was greatly enriched by their unstinting support.

