



THE HELICOPTER MUSEUM - AN APPEAL

The Helicopter Museum in Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset has been forced to furlough all its paid staff following the UK government enforced closure of leisure attractions during the COVID-19 virus crisis. The Museum has also taken steps to minimise all expenditure in an effort to ensure survival over the coming months.

The collection of over 100 rotary-wing aircraft is being regularly security checked by local volunteers and the helipad is remaining open for military and parapublic flights, subject to prior notice. Emails are also being monitored and answered where important. However the museum has seen the loss of all its summertime programme of special events, as well as its peak season visitors, amounting to an estimated £200,000 in near term lost revenue and delays in completing a planned business extension, which is due to have new learning facilities, conference space and retail and restaurant areas.

As a result the Trustees are seeking **donations** from supporters and the wider helicopter industry to ensure the survival of the unique collection. Such donations, however small, can be made to: www.gofundme.com/f/the-helicopter-museum-an-appeal or by **BACS** to the Helicopter Museum at the Cooperative Bank, (email: helimuseum@btconnect.com for details), or direct by **Cheque** addressed to: The Helicopter Museum, Locking Moor Road, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset BS24 8PP (Dollar and Euro cheques are accepted).

Remember - Helicopters save lives so please help the museum to continue promoting their benefits to the wider world.



Modern Chinese Warplanes – Chinese Army Aviation. by Andreas Rupprecht. Publishing Price: £20.00 (UK).

Complementing two similar volumes dedicated to the PLAAF and Naval Aviation, this comprehensive directory covers the relative recent development of People's Liberation Army Aviation Corps and therefore the majority of military helicopter development and operations in the country. Long shrouded in mystery this Force is probably the least known of China's air arms and the author does an excellent job of revealing the aircraft, the serial number systems, recent modernisation efforts and the order of battle.

In so doing, he has drawn on many anonymous sources within China, cultivated over the years, and the result is a well illustrated review that will be of great interest to those studying China's rotary-wing capabilities.

Air Ambulance Operations Manual by Claire Robinson. Published by Haynes Publishing. Price: £22.99 (UK). \$36.95 (USA).

This 172 page hardback provides an insight into the role and operation of helicopter air ambulances, focusing on the UK and using the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance as a typical example. Well illustrated, the subject matter covers the aircraft itself, flying operations, the medical staff and equipment – in all just about everything you might want to know about air ambulances. What's nice too is that a proportion of the sale of each book is being donated to Air Ambulances UK, the official national charity which supports the work of all 21 of the nation's air ambulances, funded as they are solely through donations and sponsorship.

Police Helicopter Operations Manual by Richard Brandon. Published by Haynes Publishing. Price: £25.00 (UK). \$36.95 (USA).

Following the same general theme as the Air Ambulance manual (above) this similar sized hardback traces the history of police air support in the UK since 1921 and tells how the controversial National Police Air Service has brought all previously individual 43 forces in England and Wales together, in an effort to deliver a borderless aviation capability country wide.

It also takes an in-depth look at the London Metropolitan Police Air Support Unit, examines how the police helicopters work and their various roles, as well as studying the onboard surveillance equipment and systems, crew recruitment and training, helicopter maintenance and other related subject matters. There are also over 200 photographs and illustrations and, as the author has almost 15 years air support experience, culminating in heading up the Metropolitan Police ASU and being responsible for the introduction of the latest custom-built public helicopters with their high-tech surveillance equipment, you can be sure he is well qualified to tell the story.

The First Helicopter Boys by David Taylor. Published by Pen & Sword Books. Price: £25.00 (UK). \$39.95 (USA).

You know you're getting old when familiar names and acquaintances pop up in a book about the early days of helicopter operations, in particular during the Malayan Emergency of 1947-1960. This early post WW2 conflict saw the Royal Air Force and the Army using the first generation of practical helicopters to move troops around the humid Malayan jungle, against Communist terrorists attempting to take over the country, and this book is effectively a collection of fading memories from those who were there, drawn from various sources.

Those memories include multiple examples of "learning on the job", be it removing a Pratt & Whitney piston engine from a Whirlwind Mk.4, using makeshift-equipment in a hacked out jungle clearing, vertical take offs and landings amidst 61m (200ft) trees, casualty evacuation using a wicker basket because the designated external metal pannier was too heavy to lift, and many acts of courage born out of necessity. Over 300 pages of absorbing history and highly recommended.

Figures of Merit – Remembrances of Those Who Built on Army – NASA Collaboration and a New Age of Rotary-Wing Technology 1965-1985 by Robert A. Ormiston and Irving C. Statler. Published by NASA. Price: n/a.

This weighty tome (2.38kg/5.25lb) is an in-house collection of rotary-wing projects, people and the offices within NASA and includes personal recollections of experimental aircraft such as the Bell X-14 and XV-15 but also with many personal anecdotes and cross referencing to relevant NASA papers. Of interest to the serious historian.

Helicopter

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