

in laying large pipe lines in inaccessible areas, or off loading containers from ships near shore.

The machine was flown by four pilots. One controlled the Heli-stat from the rear port Heli-stat station of the suspended load centre. The other three helicopters were manned by dual-rated pilots who were capable of assuming control if necessary.

The Heli-stat could fly 165 miles and had a maximum air speed of 65 mph.

a helicopter phenomenon known as ground resonance.

The pilot correctly increased power and collective pitch to lift clear of the ground and reduce this vibration. However, the vibration was sufficient to cause a structural failure as the starboard rear helicopter broke off its mounting, its rotors cutting into the envelope.

The unbalanced lift then made the vibrations worse and all of the helicopters, including the pilot's, broke free, and crashed. →

FUSETRA CONFERENCE LEADS THE WAY

Chris Cauchi reports

THE BID to create a solid foundation for the revival of seaplanes as a means of communication took another step forward recently when the FUSETRA (FUTURE SEAPLANE TRAFFIC) conference was held just prior to the Malta International Air Show.

The project is slowly trying to make inroads with the initiative being led by Dornier Aviation GmbH, in Germany. The company has received a European Commission (EC) funded contract for the investigation of future seaplane traffic in Europe.

Among those attending the conference was Dr. Bernd Stater, a well-known engineer who has worked with Dornier in the past. He told *World Airnews* that the current aircraft on the market could not address the seaplane traffic that would be generated once proper infrastructure had been set up. He expressed his frustration at the fact that, at present, commuter seaplane or amphibian operations were only available in very few locations around Europe.

Besides Dornier Aviation, the consortium involved in the project is made up of Harbourair Malta, Stater Consulting together with the universities of Glasgow, Munich and Rzeszow. The programme started in December 2009 and will last until the middle of 2011.

The conference in Malta was addressed among others, by Captain Barry Lightning, from Harbourair Malta, who spoke extensively about landing sites and the proper infrastructure needed if seaplane transport was to flourish, and Iren Dornier, who, is the grandson of German aviation pioneer Dr. Claude Dornier.

The general objective of FUSETRA is to demonstrate the needs and to quantify the potential, of seaplane traffic business development. Iren Dornier made a presentation about how the future amphibian aircraft should look like. He explained that his idea called for an aircraft with between 15 and 19 seats, made out of composites and highly resistant to the corrosive elements of seawater.

Delegates from different companies were present, including representatives of Sea-wings, an operator that flies three Cessna Caravans in Dubai, and Dina Krivososova, from the Russian aircraft giant Beriev. Although not part of FUSETRA, she explained that Beriev was looking with great interest at the seaplane market.

There was general consensus, that the FUSETRA conference in Malta was a huge success and, it is hoped, tangible benefits can be reaped in the not so distant future. →

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