ANAHEIM HAI REPORT

Robinson

rides the

crest of

the wave
The depressed state of new
helicopter sales has augured
well for manufacturers of
"low-cost" light machines.
Frank Robinson is delighted
with sales performance of the
R-22, having just secured a
sale of six Beta models to
Shimano of Japan.
Shimano's first two aircraft
sailed for Osaka last month
and the rest will be delivered
at a rate of two per month.
Robinson announces that
due to an upswing in sales
there will be no price hike for
1986 aircraft. Prices have
actually been reduced for a
wide range of on-board
avionics and Seattle-based
Classic Helicopter has won
FAA approval for a sling
hook, which will be sold for
$2,700. The kit is aimed at
training pilots to carry exter-
nally slung loads, and the
hook is limited to 4001b with a
maximum speed of 75kt.

The manufacturer says that
he has not been badly hit
by the recession, the trough
having bottomed out in 1982.
Since then sales have in-
creased steadily, with export
and domestic sales evenly
split. Production is running at
ten per month and is about to
increase to 12 per month, with
a one-month backlog.
The new Beta model
features a power increase
from 124 h.p. to 132 h.p.,
larger instrument panel with
space for an artificial horizon
and directional gyro, and a
redesigned heater system to
reduce fogging.
Three float-equipped Mari-
ners have been sold, after a
two-year FAA certification
programme. Robinson hopes
to have CAA certification
soon and says that UK sales
are the best in Europe.
Australia, New Zealand, and
Japan have also been prime
territories.

He cites the ruggedness of
the Lycoming O-320 as one
reason for the type's popu-
larity, important for an
aircraft which is being
increasingly used by tuna
fishing boats for fish recon-
naissance.

Robinson's R22 Mariner is gaining popularity with the tuna fishing industry

MBB claims

EMS lead
MBB delivered 14 BK.117s
for the US Emergency Medi-
cal Service (EMS) market last
year. This tripled the number
of EMS BK.117s and the
company claims that the type
is the most desirable EMS
aircraft available.

The BK.117, developed
jointly with Japan's Kawasaki,
features double rear doors and
a spacious cabin, which makes
it attractive to medical crews
working under pressure. West
Germany has long been accus-
tomed to using helicopters in
the emergency medical role,
and the company claims that
25,000 missions have been
flown by its aircraft in West
Germany alone.

MBB president "Wes"
Moore announces that David
Smith, formerly with Offshore
Logistics and Sikorsky, has
been appointed executive
vice-president and general
manager from March 1. Flight
understands that Smith will
become company president,
following Moore's retirement
later this year. Moore will
continue as a company direc-
tor.

MBB sees the growing need
for EMS machines as its main
US market. Moore says that
MBB has now won 58 per cent
of the US twin-engined EMS
business. Awareness of the
full potential of helicopters is
growing, he says, and he
points out that the number
of EMS programmes has

increased from 132 to 200 in
the last decade.
The BO105 has been long
established in the offshore
role (the company's best
customer being Alaska/Gulf
offshore operator ERA, which
operates 24).
Moore points out that 23
new EMS programmes were
started in the USA during
1985. To meet this growing
demand, MBB is confident
that the BK.117 will appeal to
medical teams that require
increased cabin space for their
medical equipment and
personnel.
US Jet Aviation has now
purchased three additional
BK.117s, which brings its
BK.117 fleet to seven, making
it the world's largest operator
of the type. The company was
the first US BK.117 operator
and now runs EMS
programmes in Washington
D.C., Charlottesville, and
Jacksonville, and is about to
start two new programmes in
Cleveland and Erie, Pennsyl-
vania.

The new aircraft will be
equipped with the Swiss light-
weight Bucher EMS system,
featuring an aluminium floor
with mountings for litters and
seats, two ferno stretchers,
seating for two intensive-care
nurses, and a specialised
instrument wall with ceiling
cabinets.

To underline its commit-
ment to the helicopter's
humanitarian role, MBB has
awarded its annual Golden
Hour Award to Bill Helmig of
Rocky Mountain Helicopters
in Provo, Utah, for rescuing
two people from drowning.

Agusta grabs
larger slice
of smaller

cake
Despite the political shock
waves in Britain of the West-
land affair, there was a deter-
mined show of solidarity
between Westland and part-
ner Agusta with both compa-
nies sharing a common stand
at the convention. Agusta
president Enrico Striano was
keen that news of the A.109's
sales success should take
precedence over the inevitable
public interest in the British
Government's embarrass-
ment.

The A. 109 has been selling
well in the US civil market,
with 24 orders last year.
Market share has increased
by more than 10 percentage
points to 22-7 per cent, says
Agusta. While Striano is en-
couraged by this, he points out
that it is a larger share of a
smaller cake. The A. 109 is the
only Agusta product sold in
the USA. There are 75 in the
country, and warranty terms
have been extended to 2,000hr.

Striano sees no prospects
for an immediate market
upturn, but he says that obso-
lescence will eventually force
operators to re-equip. He is
still looking to sell up to 150
aircraft per year, and hopes
eventually to build up to 250
per year, "but it will not be for
a couple of years", he says.
Meanwhile, Striano, like
his competitors, stresses
customer support, including a
computer-aided maintenance
programme which enables the
customer to maintain the
A. 109 for $250/hr for parts
and a further $100/hr for
labour.

The company is making a
determined bid to market the
SIAI-Marchetti SF.260TP
turboprop aerobatic trainer
and the Caproni C.22J light
twin-jet trainer.
Veteran industry executive
and record-breaking pilot
R. F. "Fritz" Harvey has
moved from Allison to become
vice-president marketing with
Agusta, with responsibility for
North and Central America.
Discussions are being held
with Allison to equip the
A.109 "widebody" with a new
engine.

FLIGHT INTERNATIONAL, 15 February 1986 21