DEFENCE

JVX

is V-22

Osprey
WASHINGTON D.C.

The Bell-Boeing JVX tilt-
rotor has been designated the
V-22 Osprey. US Marine
Corps assault transport
versions, the first to be deliv-
ered, will be designated
MV-22As.

The US Navy's decision not
to procure an interim engine
for the V-22 joint-Services
tilt-rotor will delay first flight
by six months to early 1988,
but deliveries will still begin
in 1991.

To offset cost growth in the
almost $2,500 million devel-
opment programme, the US
Navy, as V-22 executive
service, has cancelled a
contract with General Elec-
tric for T64-GE-717 engines.
These would have powered
first prototypes and six early
production aircraft.
A first flight with interim
engines was planned for
August 1987, with deliveries
of T64-powered aircraft to
begin in 1991. Originally the
first V-22 to be powered by
definitive engines was to have
flown in October 1988, with
production deliveries to begin
in 1992.

The need to cut devel-
opment costs coincided with
assurances from engine
manufacturers that deliveries
of the definitive powerplant
could be advanced eight
months for a February 1988
first flight while meeting the
1991 delivery deadline. The
Navy elected to cancel the
interim engine and to reduce
flight-test aircraft from seven
to six, saving some $105
million.

Other measures taken to
reduce V-22 development
costs include deleting
the nose-mounted 0-5in
machine gun turret. Avionics
equipment will now be moun-
ted in the nose to maintain
the original e.g. limit range.
The gun turret might be
adopted at a later stage,
and the avionics equipment
relocated aft.

Three companies are com-
peting for the V-22 engine
contract. Front runners are
General Electric and Pratt &

Whitney, both working on
5,000 s.h.p.-class turboshafts
under the US Army's Modern
Technology Demonstrator
Engine (MTDE) programme.
General Electric's GE27
MTDE began running late
last year, and Pratt &
Whitney's PW3005 is due to
run early this year. Allison is
proposing a derivative of its
T56 and T701 (Boeing HLH)
engines.

Partners Bell and Boeing-
Vertol are in the final stages
of a 23-month, $69 million
V-22 preliminary design
contract. Full-scale devel-
opment is scheduled to begin
in June. An engine devel-
opment contract will be let in
May.
V-22 is a joint-Services
project. The US Marine Corps
has the largest requirement,
for 552 assault transports to
replace CH-46s and CH-53s.
The Navy requires 50 for
combat rescue, to replace
HH-3s. The Air Force
currently requires 80 V-22s,
also for combat rescue and
long-range covert operations.
The Army is undecided, but
could require up to 231 V-22s
for logistics transport.

Austria delays
fighter again
VIENNA ~

The deadline for Austria's
choice of a new fighter has
been pushed back for the
third time since September,
to May 31, the Austrian MoD
tells Flight. But the extended
deadline has given time for a
fifth contender to enter the
race for the contract.
An unnamed arms dealer
has offered secondhand
Mirage Ills. The competitors
are now British Aerospace,
offering 24 secondhand Light-
ning Mk.53s, Dassault and
the new entrant, both
proposing secondhand Mirage
Ills, Northrop, proposing 16
new F-5E/F Tigers, and Saab,
offering 24 ex-Swedish Air
Force J35 Drakens.

The deadline was pushed
back following a meeting of
Austria's all-party defence
committee. The committee

No/Type Price
(AScti)

Annual Service
operating expiry
(ASch)
24 Lightnings 1,900 million 250 million
24 Drakens 2,900 million
24 Mirage Ills 3,800 million
16 F-SE/Fs

160 million
120 million

1999
1995
2010
c4,000 million 110 million c2020

was split over the question of
whether to buy new or
secondhand aircraft.

The MoD tells Flight that
the final decision will proba-
bly be made before the May
31 deadline, a date quoted by
the Federal Chancellor as
much to quell Press interest
in the contract as for any
other reason.

The new fighter will be in
service about a year and a half
after the decision is made.
The F-5 could be operational
slightly earlier because it
is a new aircraft, says the
MoD.

Israel bids

for US Navy
RPV contract
TEL AVIV

Mazlat, a joint subsidiary of
Israel Aircraft Industries and
Tadiran set up to manu-
facture remotely piloted vehi-
cles, is bidding for a $200
million US Navy contract for
12 batteries of mini-RPVs.
The deal would involve
supplying the entire launch-
ing, tracking, and recovery
systems, and involves about
100 mini-RPVs.

Zwika Schiller, Mazlat's
managing director, tells Flight
that a new mini-RPV is under
development and would have
a greater range, bigger pay-
load, and fly higher than any
of the mini-RPVs in use with
either the US Army or Navy.
"It will also be more sophisti-
cated and versatile than
anything in service," says
Schiller.

Schiller also emphatically
denies press reports in the
USA that six of the eight
Israeli RPVs supplied to the
US Navy were totally
unusable because of technical
defects. He hints that these
adverse reports are connected
with the US Navy's new RPV
contract which is to be
tendered soon, and intended
to damage Mazlat's chances
of winning.
Schiller concurs that the
reports might have been
caused by difficulties the in-
service RPVs had initially.
Strong TV signals off the US
West coast had affected
tracking of the RPVs, but a
modification has overcome
this problem.

RAF

Shackletons

to carry on
LONDON ~

The continuing delay of
entry into service of the
British Aerospace Nimrod
AEW.3 is now likely to result
in the Royal Air Force
refurbishing its Avro Shackle-
ton AEW.2s and retaining
them in service.
Air Chief Marshal Sir
David Craig, Nato Com-
mander-in-Chief of UK Air
Forces and C-in-C of RAF
Strike Command, confirms
that the Nimrod AEW's prob-
lems are centred on the radar
system, built by GEC-
Marconi Avionics.

Flight understands that the
receiver signal-to-noise ratio
is too low. Because of this, the
computerised tracking system
attempts to allocate tracks
and find height information
on noise spikes. This, in turn,
overloads the computer.
Programme costs on
Nimrod AEW are estimated
to have risen from the
projected £300 million in 1976
to more than £1,000 million
today. Only a small part of
this is because of inflation. It
could be another two years
before the RAF accepts the
Nimrod AEW.

The five remaining Shack-
letons could be refurbished for
about £1 million, says the
RAF, and the go-ahead for
this must be given before the
end of 1985. The Shackletons
could run on another five
years after refit, although the
1940s-vintage AN/APS-20
radar is of limited value
except in the training role.
The RAF has no plans to fit a
new radar, but Thorn-EMI's
Searchwater, as fitted to
Royal Navy Sea Kings, is
an obvious contender.
Another problem is the lack of
industry expertise and tool-
ing for the piston-engined
Shackletons. It is ironic that
a fairly large and varied
Shackleton spares holding
is out of reach in South
Africa.

ACM Craig is confident
that Nimrod AEW will work,
GEC-Marconi Avionics says
that the problem can be over-
come, and sources estimate
that another year will be
sufficient.

w FLIGHT International, 26 January 1985