*r debates nev
Directors of Britain's third busi- million. The terminal's future est airport, Manchester, will
decide this month whether to
go ahead with a £557 million
second international terminal
after securing UK Government
approval for only the first of five
years required borrowing.
Local-government-owned
airports such as Manchester still
require UK Department of
Transport (DoT) approval for
borrowings, under the 1986
Airports Act. The DoT has
approved the borrowing of £10
million in 1989/90, so long as
the airport raises a further £6-8
million from its profits.
The full borrowing require-
ment over five years is £225

by Kieran Daly
The use of real smoke in a
£6,000 cabin simulator is
a key feature of London
Gatwick Airport's new cabin-
crew fire training course. The
only other UK unit offering
real smoke training, says
Gatwick, is the Civil Aviation
Authority School at Teeside,
which concentrates on

"instructing the instructors".
Gatwick's own instructors train
at Teeside over two days.
The Gatwick course, costing
£190 for 20 students, lasts up
to three hours and allows
strikingly realistic experience
of galley, toilet, and elec-
trical panel fires. Students
extinguish a single foam-
cushion fire, but smoke is
normally produced from hay
and rags because the toxicity
hazard from real seat fires is
considered too great. Gatwick
Fire Service, which runs the
course, also has a fully-
furnished Trident Three
airframe but can only use
cosmetic smoke in it.
"In a survivable accident the
number of survivors depends
basically on the .actions of the
crew," says deputy senior
airport fire officer John
Standing. "Apart from a real
aeroplane, this simulator is
about as realistic as you
can get. People get brain-
washed into thinking smoke is
all white and .cold. We do not
aim to frighten them, but we
have to make them aware of
reality."
Airline representatives wit-
nessing a demonstration were
impressed that any students
who failed to extinguish a fire

rests on the Manchester board's
assessment of the likelihood
of gaining permission for sub-
sequent borrowing. Aviation
minister Lord Brabazon
reassured the airport directors
to a degree, saying that the
Government had never refused
permisssion "for an existing
project".
Both sides are aware that the
total project cost is £557
million, with the annual fund-
ing requirement peaking at £75
million. Manchester Airport
deputy chairman Peter Smith
has made it clear that construc-
tion would not start unless the
directors were certain of seeing

promptly saw it develop in front
of them. Along with showing,
via a side door in the simulator,
how the • smoke flow leaves a
clear- area near the floor,
this experience would make a
lasting impression on students,
they believed.
Gatwick says that 19 air-
lines have expressed interest,
although some might send only
instructors on the course. The
airport requires airlines to sign
an indemnity against personal
risk, but stresses that three
instructors are always on hand.
With all doors open, natural
airflow clears the simulator of
smoke in about seven seconds.

Airlines are encouraged to
supply their students with extin-
guishers of the type in actual
use. The course stresses the

v terminal
it through to completion. The
board has already purchased an
additional 150 acres of land
needed for the terminal, and
seems likely to go ahead.
The terminal, to be built in
two phases, will boost
Manchester's passenger capac-
ity from its present 12 million a
year to 16 million, and then to
23 million.
The management at
Manchester is keenly aware
of the importance of increased
capacity as traffic pressure
grows at Heathrow and
Gatwick. The latest DoT
figures predict further growth
of regional airports into the
next century.

importance of minimising
discharge quantity to avoid
toxicity risks associated with
chemical agents. "If a cup of
coffee will put it out, then use
it", says Standing.
The unit is developing an
oxygen breathing apparatus
simulator which will use easily
replenishable compressed air
instead of pure oxygen to cut
the cost.

Gatwick says it is able to
tailor courses to airline- require-
ments. Cheaper refresher
courses designed to fulfil
minimum legal requalification
requirements are available, and
courses can be run*, at
night if requested. The simu-
lator can be reconfigured to
illustrate a "combi" passenger/
cargo aircraft.

American

opens West
Coast hub
American Airlines has inau-
gurated its US West Coast hub
at San Jose in California, with
68 flights a day to 15 cities and
18 daily flights by the American
Eagle feeder network. By 1991
American plans 175 flights a
day from San Jose.
The airline is aiming
primarily at business travellers
from surrounding high-
technology companies. Ameri-
can substantially raised fares
when opening the new hub, but
claims it has met little customer
resistance.
The carrier hopes for a 20 per
cent rise in passenger numbers
through San Jose, despite fare
increases of up to 18 per cent.
The San Jose metropolitan area
is one of the fastest growing
in the USA—high-technology
employment is predicted to
grow by 36 per cent by year
2000. American's choice of San
Jose avoided a direct con-
frontation with other major
operators at San Francisco,
including United, which has a
hub there.

American's major concern
now is to boost its European
services. The carrier believes
that, when European deregula-
tion bites, it will be easier for US
operators with a strong existing
presence to increase services.

TNT plans
northern

UK base
Overnight cargo carrier TNT
Express Europe has selected
Liverpool Airport as its north-
ern UK operating base. Other
regional centres in the country
are planned.
The company will use a
temporary hangar when it starts
operations next month, and
plans to build its own unit,
costing up to £1 million, in due
course.

TNT cites favourable road
links and the relative lack of
competition, which allows a
dedicated service from the
airport, as key factors in its
choice.
The carrier will initially oper-
ate its BAe 146QTs to Belfast
twice-nightly, Prestwick, and
Cologne.

Realism rules on Gatwick fire course

Cabin crew learn to fight real fires in realistic surroundings at Gatwick

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