GENERAL AVIATION

Future gloomy for general aviation
BY IAN GOOLD

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S general-aviation manufac-
turing, brightened briefly
by slightly increased sales at the
top end of the market last year,
continues to look gloomy. Deliv-
eries and billings for new aircraft
were down in the first six
months of 1991, according to
the General Aviation manufac-
turers Association (GAMA).
The number of aircraft
shipped fell by more than 9%
from 563 in the first half of last
year to 512. Value of shipments
declined 4.4% from $961 million
to $919 million.
GAMA says that shipments
were "not too bad at all", con-
sidering "...the war in the Gulf,
economic uncertainties abroad,
the recession at home, the re-
cently imposed luxury tax and
the continuing ravages of the
product liability crisis".

GAMA President James Gorm-
ley says: "Last year we saw an
anomaly in dollar volume; the
second quarter was the highest
billings quarter of the year due
to unusually high deliveries of
heavy business jets."
Gormley paints a rosier view
of the industry by excluding
from the picture the business
troubles of Piper, which is in
Chapter 11 bankruptcy. "If you
subtract Piper deliveries from
1990 and 1991, you actually
find an increase in the deliveries
of single-engine aircraft, as other
manufacturers pick up some of
Piper's market share." He con-
cludes, that "...the new aircraft
situation is not as disappointing
at a quick glance as the figures
might indicate".
Piper has shipped just 29 air-
craft this year, of which only
seven were delivered to custom-
ers after 31 March.

Despite this interpretation of
the statistics, shipments of pis-
ton singles, including Piper
products, fell by less than the
overall decline in deliveries.
Some 308 piston singles were
shipped in the first six months
of 1991, down 6.5% on 299
units a year earlier.
By far the largest fall is among
piston twins, deliveries of which
dropped from 45 to just 26 —
a fall of more than 42%.
Shipments of turboprop-
powered aircraft were 13% of
the corresponding period in
1990, down from 130 to 113.
Only the business-jet sector saw
increased deliveries — growth of
6.3% from 80 to 85.

Gormley says several manu-
facturers have "strong order
backlogs" and "...a sincere atti-
tude of cautious optimism de-
spite the many challenges we
continue to face". •

Agusta will supply firefighters to Italy
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he Italian Civilian Protec-
tion Ministry has signed a
deal with Agusta to supply 12
helicopters for use in firefighting
and emergency relief operations.
Valued at L247 billion ($183
million), the agreement involves
six CH-47C Chinooks and six

AB-412s, which will be required
for moving rapid intervention
squads, mobile field hospitals
and supplies in the event of
natural disasters such as earth-
quakes.
The helicopters will also play
a major role in firefighting mis-

sions: the Chinook can carry
about 5,000 litres of water/
chemical retardant, while the
smaller AB.412 can transport
1,000 litres.
The helicopters will be sup-
plied through a leasing arrange-
ment. D

Thorp T-211 makes certification at last
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he Thorp T-211 AeroSport
two-seat trainer/tourer has
received full UK certification —
45 years after it was designed.
The T-211 was designed by John
Thorp, who also designed the
Fletcher Fu-24 crop-sprayer, and
the T-16, which became the
Piper Cherokee, in 1946.
The T-211 — now built by
Thorp Aero of Sturgis, Kentucky
— has a US type certificate and
export certificate of air-
worthiness. It has no full US
certification, however, as it is
built only for export because of
the USA's product liability laws.
The first three markets being
attacked by Thorp are those of
the UK, Germany and Brazil.

The T-211 is an all-metal
monoplane, powered by a Tele-
dyne Continental O-200-A en-
gine of 75kW (lOOhp) output. It
has a cruising speed of 107kt
(200km/h) at 75% power, at

which speed it has a claimed
fuel consumption of 20.5 litres/
h. In Britain, it is being sold
complete apart from avionics for
£37,800 ($64,000) by Arrow Air
Services of Shipdam, Norfolk. •

Better late than never, the 45-year-old Thorp T-211 wins UK certification

BAe takes over

Rogers' services
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ritish Aerospace has set up
London Business Aviation to
take over the maintenance and
servicing contracts which are
now performed at the Hatfield
Executive Aviation Centre by
Rogers Aviation in leased prem-
ises (Flight International, 9-15
January).
Negotiations for the takeover
are expected to be completed by
1 August. Most of Rogers Avia-
tion's maintenance specialists
will join the new company.
The change is expected to lead
to increased use of the Hatfield
runway, which otherwise sees
reduced utilisation with the
planned move of BAe 146 pro-
duction to Woodford.
• Rogers Aviation has formed a
partnership with Short Brothers
to sell and support Learjet air-
craft in the UK, Ireland, Scandi-
navia, the United Arab Emirates
and parts of Africa. Sales will be
through Shorts subsidiary
Skytech Aviation Services, and
support through Rogers Avia-
tion. Shorts and Learjet are both
Bombardier subsidiaries. •

Production NOTAR

makes first flight
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he first production heli-
copter without a tail rotor,
the NOTAR-equipped McDon-
nell Douglas Helicopter MD-
520N, made its maiden flight on
2 July at the company's Mesa
site in Arizona.
The -520N is based on a
standard MD-500 model but is
modified with the NOTAR (no
tail rotor system), which uses
tail-ducted airflow for anti-
torque and directional control
instead of the usual tail rotor.

Production test pilot Brad
Donovan flew the MD-520N for
the 30-min flight and described
it as a "completely routine first
flight for a model 500- series
helicopter".
The first MD-520N is sched-
uled to be delivered to the Phoe-
nix Police Department in
October as part of an order for
17. The company has firm or-
ders for 156 helicopters with
further options on 20. •

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