HEADLINES

JAL and ANA 747s have both suffered duet blowouts

JAL 747-200 suffers

air-duct blowout

RAF Harrier crash

not linked with

electrical faults

A

Royal Air Force British Aer-
ospace Harrier GR.5 crashed
on take-off from RAF Gutersloh,
Germany, on 30 September. The
aircraft had been modified with
a new electrical system by a
British Aerospace team, in an
effort to rectify problems that
have grounded RAF Harrier
GR.5/7s since 29 July (Flight
International, 18 September).
The pilot ejected during the
take-off roll, sustaining minor
injuries. The aircraft went into
the Ems canal just outside the
airfield. The RAF will not com-
ment on the cause of the acci-
dent, but sources indicate that
the aircraft did not have any
electrical system problems.
The grounding order followed
several incidents when Harriers
suffered in-flight total electrical
failures and had to divert and
land using battery power. On 29
May, a Harrier GR.7 pilot ejected
near Gutersloh after his aircraft
suffered a total electrical failure.
On 16 July, a Harrier GR.7 had
a total electrical failure and elec-
trical-system fire near Gutersloh.
The pilot landed the aircraft and
the fire was extinguished. On 29
July, a Harrier GR.5 caught fire
in flight after an electrical fail-
ure, and landed at RAF Witter-
ing, with severe fire damage. •

Thailand cleared

for more F-16s

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he Royal Thai Air Force
should receive its second
squadron of 18 General Dynam-
ics F-16 Fighting Falcons this
month, says RTAF commander
Air Marshal Kaset Rojananil.
Delivery of the second batch
was originally scheduled for last
February, but was halted by the
military coup in Thailand, which
led to suspension of US aid.
Kaset says the air force will
shortly gain government ap-
proval for a B19 million (S760
million) purchasing plan which
will fund the F-16s and 36 AMX
strike fighters (Flight Interna-
tional, 2 October). •

A

Japan Airlines (JAL) Boeing
747-200 was forced to re-
turn to Tokyo's Narita airport
last week after suffering an air
duct failure which left a 1m x
70cm hole in the aircraft.
The duct failure, which blew
off an external panel located
beneath the port wing, happened
as the aircraft climbed through
16,000ft (5,000m) en route to
Chicago O'Hare. Pneumatic duct
pressure dropped to about one-
sixth of its normal level, but
there was no cabin depressurisa-
tion and no injury.
The failure was the latest in a
series of incidents involving
both 747s and 767s, which
prompted the US Federal Avia-
tion Administration (FAA) to
issue an airworthiness directive

O

ne of the Pratt & Whitney
JT9D engines on Trans
World Airlines Boeing 767
N603TW was changed at Shan-
non Airport, Ireland, following a
diversion from an eastbound
transatlantic flight on 15 Sep-
tember. The aircraft was flying at
about 37,000ft (11,300m) when
an engine problem is reported to
have caused the 767 to lose
height, descending to 24,000ft

(AD) in September 1990 man-
dating inspection of duct seams.
This was followed by an order
from the Japanese Transport
Ministry requiring inspection
before 5,850 cycles.
The aircraft involved in the
latest incident (JA8161) was de-
livered in June 1983, and had
accumulated 38,786h and 3,376
cycles. On 31 August, an All
Nippon 767 had a similar fail-
ure, as did a JAL 747 in 1987.
JAL says that it is replacing air
ducts in all its Boeing 747s with
new duct s which are 40%
thicker. It has so far modified 36
of 59 aircraft, and JA8161 was to
receive new ducts at its next "M"
check in Spring next year. "This
incident has pre-empted that,"
says JAL. •

before control was regained.
At the beginning of October,
TWA was continuing to investi-
gate the cause of the problem
after the engine had been re-
turned to Kansas City.
• The thrust reversers of a
British Airways Airbus A3 20
were locked out after a 4 Octo-
ber London-Aberdeen flight. The
crew reported a status message.
"No 2 engine reversible". •

USAir wants 40

Boeing 757200s
U

SAir says it is to acquire up
to 40 Boeing 757-200s, but
will also delay 15 Boeing 737
deliveries from 1993/94 to be-
tween 1995 and 1997.
The carrier is leasing ten ex-
Eastern Airlines 757s from Gen-
eral Electric Capital, then will
purchase 15 from Boeing for
delivery in 1993/94 and a fur-
ther 15 from 1995 to 1997.
President Seth Schofield says
it will make a pre-tax loss in
1991 or more than $500 million
and is to discuss cost-cutting
measures with staff. •

Germany wants

Soviets to join
Airbus Industrie

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erman parliamentary secre-
tary of state and aerospace
co-ordinator at the Federal Min-
istry of the Ecomony Erich Riedl
called for Soviet involvement in
future Airbus Industrie projects.
Riedl, in an interview with the
Suddeutsche Zeitung, said that on
future developments such as the
proposed 600-seat Airbus A350,
Soviet aerospace manufacturers
should be involved at least at
the subcontractor level.
He warned that in the wake of
the Cold War the European
aerospace industry could not
remain a "closed shop", and
should allow eastern companies
to participate.
He recognised, however, that
the likes of Soviet design bu-
reaux such as Tupolev, Yakovlev
and Ilyushin will have to re-
structure substantially before
entering into collaborative pro-
grammes in Western Europe.
Restructuring would involve a
move toward part private
ownership instead of being
wholly state-held. Even allowing
for this, Riedl thinks participa-
tion is possible by the middle of
this decade.
Soviet participation on the
A350, or on the Supersonic
Commercial Transport, would
not necessarily see a Soviet com-
pany becoming a full partner in
the consortium, Riedl says. •

TWA 767 loses engine

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