

Government conditionally clears Strato 2C funding

ANDRZEJ JEZIORSKI/MUNICH

THE GERMAN Government has approved a further DM45 million (\$32.5 million) funding package for the Grob Strato 2C research-aircraft programme, on the condition that altitude tests are successful.

The project ran into trouble in June 1994, when manufacturer Burkhart Grob demanded more Government money to fund unexpectedly expensive avionics and testing. Grob needed to cover an overrun of almost DM50 million above the original DM92.4 million budget.

The Federal Ministry of Research and Technology was originally to pay DM71 million towards the cost of the aircraft, and Grob's request that the state cover a further DM45 million led to a funding freeze which the manufacturer initially had to pay for out of its own coffers.

Grob says that the state funding is now back on schedule, and

the additional money is now in the ministry's 1995 budget. It will be released once flight tests have proved the aircraft's performance at altitudes of 59,000ft (18,000m) to 66,000ft.

According to Grob, the Government will then fund the second phase of the development programme, which involves the conversion of the aircraft to mission standard, weight optimisation and certification to Federal Aviation Regulations Part 23.

The aircraft has just had the low-pressure chargers in its compound engines connected, and is ready for high-altitude trials as soon as weather permits, says Grob. The first trial, expected at the beginning of June, is to take the aircraft to 30,000ft, with subsequent flights taking place at 45,000ft, 60,000ft and an as-yet-unspecified ceiling.

Grob says that, although the aircraft's compound propulsion system has been ground tested in altitude chambers for more

than 10h of operation at 78,700ft, the propeller performance at such altitudes is harder to predict. No altitude chamber was big enough to accommodate the aircraft's 6m-diameter, five-bladed, Mühlbauer propellers, explains the manufacturer.

The propulsion system is based on Teledyne Continental Voyager TSIOL-550 piston engines, with turbochargers connected in series supply sea-level-pressure air, maintaining a 330kW (440hp) power output at up to 78,700ft.

The high-altitude trials are expected to be completed by the end of June, clearing the way for second development phase. This stage will include the replacement of the current 56.5m-span wing with a new mission-standard wing, which will be some 600kg lighter.

The aircraft is to be operated by the German Aerospace Research Establishment for conducting atmospheric and meteorological research. □

Garrett acquires Carrier Aircraft

GARRETT AVIATION Services, the business-aircraft support unit which became independent of AlliedSignal in 1994, has bought California-based Carrier Aircraft Interiors, which specialises in corporate aircraft.

Arizona-based Garrett says that the Los Angeles International Airport-based unit will continue trading under its original title and will complement Garrett's Jet Center, which is based at nearby Van Nuys Airport.

The acquisition of Carrier will particularly expand Garrett's coverage of mid-size corporate turbine aircraft. Garrett's Jet Center concentrates on interiors for large corporate aircraft.

■ Tosington Enterprises, a manufacturer of executive seats for business aircraft and specialist seats for helicopters, has been bought by Derlan of Santa Ana, California.

Derlan manufactures various aircraft products including interiors, sheet-metal assemblies and fabricated structures, as well as metal and composite aircraft external stores. □

NEWS IN BRIEF

RECORD RUN

Cessna is claiming two speed records for the Citation X business jet after its 11 May "bicoastal" run. The aircraft was flown from Teterboro, New Jersey, to Van Nuys, California, in 4h 49min, an average true-air-speed of 448kt (694km/h); and from Van Nuys to White Plains, New York, in 4h 10min, an average of 525kt.

REPORTING FOR DUTY

McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Systems has delivered an MD520N to the Calgary, Alberta, police department — the first helicopter to be used for urban air-patrol in Canada.

Eurocopter delivers Russian BO.105s

EUROCOPTER Deutschland has handed over two BO.105 CBS helicopters to the Russian civil-defence and emergencies ministry.

The helicopters have been fitted with rescue hoists, searchlights and auxiliary fuel tanks. The aircraft will be used for medical-evacuation and search-and-rescue duties by the ministry, which is responsible for lifesaving in the wake of natural disasters.

The helicopters were collected by the ministry's Ilyushin Il-76 transport, which flew them from the military air base at Manching, southern Germany, to Moscow.

The Il-76 is used by the ministry to deploy rescue units close



The Il-76 will be used to deploy BO.105s

to disaster areas. The ministry has previously had to charter helicopters, and often these have been Mil Mi-8s, which are too

big to be carried by the Ilyushin. The \$4.8 million contract is the first direct German helicopter sale to Russia. □