

NEWS IN BRIEF

AVIONICS UPGRADE

Rockwell-Collins is to offer Dassault Aviation Falcon 50 business-jet operators an avionics upgrade, to the latest Pro Line 4 specification.

BA near to active-noise-control headset decision

BRITISH AIRWAYS is expected to place an order for 3,400 active-noise-control headsets for its pilots by the end of this month. Germany's Sennheiser and Bose of the USA are bidding for the contract, which could be worth over £1 million (\$1.6 million).

The UK airline decided to opt for the headsets after several in-flight incidents were attributed to misinterpreted air-traffic-control instructions. A subsequent study by the airline concluded that noise levels were unacceptably high in the cockpits of all of its aircraft, except the Boeing 767 and 777.

Sennheiser is offering its HMEC 25 headset. According to Karlheinz Koinzack, Sennheiser's consumer and aviation manager, the company is also in negotiation with other airlines, including Lufthansa. □

Embraer begins East European sales drive

EMBRAER HAS received letters of intent from potential customers in Russia for two of its EMB-145 50-seat regional jets as part of a marketing campaign in Eastern Europe.

The Brazilian company warns, however, that Russian certification is "...subject to how many aircraft are ordered and financed".

According to Val Engel, Embraer's regional director, Eastern Europe, the company's market forecasts show demand for up to 100 aircraft, mainly in Russia, Poland and Ukraine. "Financing is moving ahead slowly," he says. "We're trying to arrange financing through the World Bank, using mineral resources as collateral." □

Dassault aims Atlantic at European MPA tenders

DASSAULT AVIATION is to offer its Atlantic Third Generation (ATL3G) maritime-patrol aircraft (MPA) to the German, Italian and French navies. The three forces, which already operate earlier versions of the Atlantic, require a total of around 50 aircraft between 2005 and 2010.

The aircraft, offered as an alternative to the Lockheed Martin Orion 2000, incorporates many of the developments included in Dassault's now-abandoned bid for the UK Replacement Maritime Patrol Aircraft requirement.

The ATL3G is to be re-engined with Allison AE2100H turboprops driving Dowty six-bladed compos-

ite propellers, resulting in a near-10% increase in power, and up to a 15% reduction in fuel consumption, says Pierre Patry, export programme manager and head of the MPA department. Patry also reveals that the aircraft will include an all-new, two-crew, glass cockpit, using "civil, off-the-shelf avionics".

Italy has a requirement for around 16 aircraft to enter service between 2005 and 2009, while Germany needs 12 between 2007 and 2010. France will be offered the option of upgrading 22 Atlantique 2s to the ATL3G standard between 2005-2010. Patry says that development of the ATL3G would be funded by France, Germany and

Italy, with "...the share to be decided according to the number of aircraft purchased".

Germany and Italy already have an agreement, known as the MPA 2000, to co-operate in the procurement of MPAs, and France is also understood to be keen to put its Atlantique 2 mid-life modernisation requirement under the same umbrella.

Dassault has signed an agreement with Daimler-Benz Aerospace (DASA), under which DASA will act as prime contractor for Germany's requirement, and the French company is in negotiation with Alenia of Italy on the same basis. □

Northrop Grumman teams with DASA

NORTHROP GRUMMAN and Daimler-Benz Aerospace (DASA) have formed a team to produce the E-8 Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) should the US system be selected by NATO for its Airborne Ground Surveillance (AGS) programme.

NATO is expected to decide by the end of this year whether to acquire the JSTARS for battlefield surveillance and targeting.

Responses to NATO's request

for information (RFI) are due for submission in mid-June, covering the possible procurement of five, ten, or 15 aircraft. A final contract could be signed by the end of 1997.

The team would also include Matra of France, Italy's Alenia, British Aerospace and Computing Devices Canada. NATO's project office charged with completing analyses and recommending an AGS system issued an RFI under an AGS system in March.

The UK is also considering an alternative solution being studied competitively by Loral and Raytheon, probably based on a long-range business jet such as the Bombardier Global Express,

The JSTARS aircraft will be based on commercially available Boeing 707-300s, possibly re-engined with CFM International CFM56 turbofans. Also in the running are helicopter-based solutions from France's Thomson-CSF and Alenia of Italy. □



First Extra 400 sold

EXTRA FLUGZEUGBAU has secured the first sale for the Extra 400 tourer. The aircraft, now 20h into its flight-test programme, had its show debut in the static park. The Dinslaken-based company says that it has other potential customers awaiting further flight-trial results. The 400 has been successfully tested to 200kt (370km/h) air speed. Extra says that low-speed performance is better than expected.