

China builds presence on 757

CHINA'S AEROSPACE industry is further expanding its share of production of major sub-assemblies for Boeing aircraft. Chengdu Aircraft (CAC) is preparing to begin manufacturing 757 empennages from early-1997.

The company is close to completing a new production site at its Chengdu plant, at which it will build the 757's tail. Under its subcontract with Northrop Grumman it is to begin tooling and fabrication work in 1997, and deliver the first shipset in 1998.

CAC will initially concentrate on

producing the 757's vertical stabiliser, followed later by the horizontal stabiliser. Its work package will eventually be expanded to include the twinjet's fuselage section 48. It is not known how many assemblies CAC has been contracted to supply, but sources suggest that the deal could cover 1,000 shipsets.

The company has already established itself as a major subcontractor, supplying nose sections for the McDonnell Douglas MD-80/90. Its contract with Northrop Grumman represents a significant expansion of 757 work in China, which

until now has been limited to Shenyang Aircraft (SAC) supplying the twinjet's cargo doors.

SAC, together with Xian Aircraft (XAC) and Shanghai Aviation Industrial, have also been contracted by Boeing to supply tail sub-assemblies for the next-generation Boeing 737-600/700/800. XAC is due to begin delivering vertical stabilisers in early 1998. A year later, SAIC will begin supplying the new 737's horizontal stabiliser to Seattle and, with SAC, will begin building the new aircraft's aft-fuselage section 48. □

Fokker wins N-250 fatigue-testing contract from IPTN

FOKKER CONTROL Systems has been selected by IPTN to supply a rig for fatigue testing of the N-250 commuter aircraft. Indonesia's state-owned test laboratory, LUK, will be responsible for integrating the equipment and carrying out the tests.

LUK will perform an accelerated-flight-cycle programme on an N-250 test airframe, split into forward and aft sections. According to Aart Hemmink, general manager of Fokker Control Systems, each flight-cycle can be performed in "approximately 2min".

The rig will be controlled by hydraulic jacks, and include a pressurisation system and an electronic control and data acquisition unit, adds Hemmink. Amsterdam-based Control Systems, a division of Fokker Space, will begin deliveries during the first quarter of 1997. □

Coltec to supply CTP800 FADEC

LIGHT HELICOPTER Turbine Engine (LHTEC) has selected Coltec Aerospace to supply its Model EMC35E full-authority digital-engine-control (FADEC) for the CTP800 turboprop engine. The EMC35E was designed, and will be manufactured, by Coltec's West Hartford, Connecticut-based Chandler Evans Control Systems division.

The CTP800 is a derivative of LHTEC's T800 turboshaft engine, and has been earmarked for re-engineing the US Army's fleet of Bombardier de Havilland Dash 7s.

"This is our first FADEC for a turboprop," says Paul Glover, vice president marketing and programmes at Chandler Evans. "We expect the advanced aspects of the CTP800 engine and our fuel control system will enable us to make significant inroads in the market for turboprop engines."

Coltec Aerospace has been contracted to supply the first 12 production shipsets of main landing gear systems for the McDonnell Douglas F/A-18E/F fighter. □



Cathay takes 'shark-skin' A340

CATHAY PACIFIC HAS TAKEN delivery of an Airbus A340-300 with 30% of its skin covered with so-called "shark-skin foils" or riblets. The in-service test follows experiments carried out by Airbus, in conjunction with US manufacturer 3M, using an A320 partially covered with the drag-reducing plastic film. "Performance results have been as expected, but in any trial you discover problems, and the shark-skin foils of that time began to turn yellow and were difficult to remove," says Klaus Schneider, Airbus deputy department manager, structures. The A340 will be used to test the latest film, developed for improved durability. Lufthansa has shelved plans to participate because of the seven days needed to apply the film to one of its A340s. "It will not return so much money for the risk we will take," says Dr Jürgen Thorbeck, senior project manager, aircraft evaluation and concepts.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ SAS CHOOSES BFG

BFGoodrich will supply wheels and brakes for 41 Boeing 737-600s which SAS has on firm order, and for 35 on option. Delivery of kits is scheduled to begin in mid-1998. SAS will receive its first 737-600 in August 1998.

■ UNITED TAKES BEA

United Airlines has ordered BE Aerospace's (BEA) B/E 2000M individual-passenger entertainment system for its Boeing 747-400, 777 and 767-300 fleets. The initial \$60 million deal covers the supply of video systems for installation on 54 aircraft, with deliveries to the airline due to begin in February 1997.

US Army Apaches to get colour displays

MOST OF the US Army's fleet of McDonnell Douglas (MDC) AH-64D Longbow Apache helicopters are to be retrofitted with AlliedSignal full-colour, flat-panel, multi-purpose displays (MPDs), replacing the existing monochrome units.

The deal could eventually cover up to 1,000 aircraft, if the Army pushes ahead with plans to upgrade 758 AH-64As to the Longbow Apache standard, requiring over 4,000 MPDs. The colour displays will also be fitted as standard to the 97 AH-64Ds ordered by the UK and Dutch armed forces.

The colour MPDs are designed to reduce crew workload by colour-coding critical flight information. They also weigh significantly less than the monochrome units which they will replace. The AlliedSignal MPD uses an Optical Imaging Systems active-matrix liquid-crystal-display and a Korry Electronics-designed backlight.

An initial batch of preproduction MPDs will be delivered to MDC in December for flight testing, which is due to start early in 1997. Installation of production units is scheduled to begin in March 1998. □