

BA boosts Gatwick by transferring 777-200s

BRITISH AIRWAYS is to widen the role of Airline Management (AML), its low-cost joint venture which operates long-haul routes from Gatwick Airport, as part of an expansion which will see BA's capacity from London's second airport increase by 25% from mid-1998.

It has confirmed plans to transfer five Boeing 777-200s to Gatwick as part of the expansion from February 1998. These will replace McDonnell Douglas DC-10-30s on routes to Atlanta, Bermuda and Dallas.

Meanwhile, BA is transferring its Jamaican services to AML, increasing frequencies to Kingston and Montego Bay to four flights a week from three. AML will also operate new routes to Cancun in Mexico, Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic and Tobago in the Caribbean on BA's behalf, while more flights will be added on most of its own routes.

Initially, the AML services will be operated by McDonnell Douglas DC-10s leased from BA in the airline's colours, and flown by BA flightcrews.

It is expected that the AML DC-10s will be replaced by Boeing 777s, beginning in 1999, at which time the crewing arrangements may be re-organised. □

777 suffers new engine troubles

GUY NORRIS/LOS ANGELES

PRATT & WHITNEY and General Electric are inspecting their respective PW4090 and GE90 engines for the Boeing 777, after a new series of problems with powerplants on British Airways and United Airlines aircraft.

The GE90 suffered a crack in a rotating seal on the high-pressure compressor (HPC), between the second and sixth stage, which was unearthed during routine maintenance on a high-time test engine at Evendale, Ohio.

GE says that, by 23 October, some 31 engines with factory, flight and production test and revenue service experience had been inspected, and one engine, on a BA 777, had been removed with a seal crack. Further inspections on the remainder of the fleet are due to be completed by early November.

The P&W problem was discovered more dramatically when an engine had to be shut down in flight after a "large bang" was heard as the United 777 rotated on take-off from London Heathrow Airport in the UK.

Another incident, not severe enough to warrant an in-flight shut down, was also experienced on another United aircraft shortly after take-off from Los Angeles



P&W thinks that United's 777/PW4000 problems are "unique incidents"

International Airport in the USA.

The engines involved are being stripped down and inspected to find the cause, although P&W says: "It appears that they were unique incidents. We don't think we have a fleet-wide problem." Investigations are believed to be centred on bearing seals in the base of the engine, particularly since the powerplant in the Heathrow event generated a low-oil warning.

GE, meanwhile, seems closer to defining the cause of the HPC cracking in a seal tooth as an "undesirable seal rub condition". The company believes that the condition will be eliminated by "a minor modification of the adjacent honey-

comb shroud, which is designed to make contact with the rotating seal". GE adds that metallurgical analysis confirms that the crack is "...stable and its growth rate is not accelerating". It also says the condition will be controlled through a periodic inspection programme.

■ P&W's higher-thrust PW4098 engine has passed a critical fan-blade containment test at East Hartford, Connecticut.

The test was the fifth in a series of 13 major certification requirements for the engine which is due to receive certification from the US Federal Aviation Administration in March 1998 for the higher-weight variant of the 777-300. □

EC will inspect Delta's new Boeing sole-supplier deal

DELTA AIRLINES has signed a definitive 20-year, 644-aircraft, sole-supplier contract with Boeing, but says that the manufacturer cannot enforce any exclusivity provisions unless permitted by the European Commission (EC).

The EC has said that it will examine the contract, which Boeing maintains meets the terms imposed as a condition of approving its merger with McDonnell Douglas (MDC).

Delta says that the sole-supplier contract guarantees it the pricing and flexibility benefits of the original "exclusive" agreement. These include the ability to adjust deliveries, substitute between Boeing models and trade-in aircraft – and even to buy non-Boeing types in

certain unspecified categories.

The deal supports the replacement and rationalisation of Delta's domestic fleet, and covers 106 firm orders for delivery from 1998 through to 2006, valued at \$6.7 billion, as well as 124 options and 414 "rolling options" for aircraft deliv-

eries through to 2018. Delta is still evaluating its international fleet requirements, which may lead to the airline exercising its 777 options.

The engine component of the order is still under negotiation, although an \$800 million deal is being tied up for the CFM Inter-

national CFM56-7 engine, which powers the 737. In April Delta selected General Electric to power the 767s and the Rolls-Royce Trent for the 777 options (*Flight International*, 9-15 April, P6). While the airline's existing 90-strong 757 fleet is entirely Pratt & Whitney PW2000-powered, the selection of an engine for the additional 757s, including that for 110 options, is still open.

Delta also holds 16 options on the Boeing MD-11, with one of the 15 aircraft on firm order still to be delivered. Delta adds that its 15 firm orders and 60 options on the Boeing MD-90 stay in place. It is widely believed, however, that these former MDC products will be removed from Delta's fleet. □

DELTA'S BOEING ORDER

Type	Orders	Options	Rolling options	Total	Order delivery schedule	Engines
737-600/700/800	70	60	280	410	1998-2006	CFM56-7
757	5	20	90	115	1998-1999	N/A
767-300/300ER	10	10	19	39	1998-1999	GE CF6-80C2
767-400ER	21	24	25	70	2000-2001	GE CF6-80C2
777	-	10	-	10	N/A	R-R Trent-800
Total	106	124	414	644		

Note: Delivery of the options and rolling options extends to 2018, with the rolling options replacing options as they are exercised or expire, and will then be assigned a schedule.

N/A: not announced

Source: Delta Air Lines