

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## ■ RACAL IN THE MIDS

Racal-MESL of Newbridge, Scotland, is to supply integrated filter/amplifier components to Italtel of Italy for the Multifunction Information Distribution System (MIDS) Link-16 terminal. The MIDS is being developed by France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the USA for the Class 2 Joint Tactical Information Distribution System. It will initially be produced in 1999 for the Boeing F/A-18E/F and Eurofighter EF2000.

## ■ MARION STEALTH

GE Aircraft Engines is transferring production of fixed false fan faces for the F414 engine to Marion Composites of Marion, Virginia. Boeing F/A-18E/F Super Hornets will use two of the devices to conceal rotating fan blades and reduce Doppler radar "glint".

## ■ RAYTHEON UPGRADE

Raytheon has won an \$81.2 million contract to upgrade the US Air Force Ballistic Missile Early Warning System, replacing radars with solid state, phased array, devices at Clear Air Station, Alaska, by October 2001. Similar upgrades have been performed at Thule, Greenland, and Fylingdales, UK.

## ■ SONEX HEAVY FUEL

Sonex Research is to convert 40 unmanned air vehicle (UAV) two-stroke engines to use "heavy" fuel (JP-5 or diesel) for the US Marine Corps. The Annapolis, Maryland based company will next month complete similar conversions of engines on US Navy Pioneer UAVs.

## ■ TAIWAN RIVETS

Aerofit Products of California has contracted with National Aerospace Fasteners of Taiwan to manufacture fitting devices and fasteners for Boeing 757s and 767s.

# UK industry looks for cash to fight off German A3XX wing bid

IAN SHEPPARD/LONDON

THE UK AEROSPACE industry is stepping up pressure on its Government to match Germany in funding future wing research, warning that failure to do so would mean losing strategic wing development work for the Airbus A3XX 600-seater airliner to German industry.

British Aerospace Airbus is waiting for a UK Government decision on whether to match a move by Germany to direct DM300 million (\$164 million) to support a future-wing research and demonstration programme.

British Aerospace, along with Shorts, Dowty Aerospace and Rolls-Royce among others, has requested £230 million (\$380 million) over the next five years to fund development of a next generation wing with integrated engine and landing gear capable of being used on large aircraft such as the A3XX.

Wing design is one of the few areas in which the UK is a world

leader. German industry, led by Daimler-Benz Aerospace (Dasa), has been looking to break Bae's monopoly on wing design for Airbus in recent years. A bid by Dasa to lead wing design on the Airbus Future Large Aircraft military transport caused a serious row between the two companies in 1995, before it was resolved in the UK's favour.

The Powered Wing programme is one of several research projects which the Society of British Aerospace Companies (SBAC) is looking to the Government to help fund to maintain the industry's competitiveness.

Peter Perry, manager of the SBAC scheme, known as Foresight Action, says that if a decision is not forthcoming "very soon", work on the wing project will be "too late for the A3XX".

The SBAC says: "A full proposal was submitted to government. Industry is awaiting a reply." Perry admits, however, that he is pessimistic about the outcome of

Government deliberations.

This view is reinforced by recent Government reluctance to provide £123 million in repayable launch aid for Bae's development of the A340-500/600 wing, although the deal was finally agreed after months of haggling.

UK Government provision of research funds for civil aerospace is virtually non-existent. With the Labour Government maintaining a tight rein on spending, there appears little prospect of the funding being made available.

In contrast, the SBAC says that the level of German funding directed to its wing programme is equivalent to half the DM600 million (\$327 million) earmarked for A3XX-focused research by Bonn in 1996 under a four-year programme (*Flight International*, 11-17 December, 1996). Sources at Airbus in Toulouse confirm that Dasa has made no secret of its intention to make a bid to lead development of the next-generation wing. □

## USAF develops flow visualisation method

THE US AIR Force's Wright Patterson Research Laboratory at Dayton, Ohio, has developed a new flow visualisation technique for combustion flows, using holography and lasers.

The flow is recorded by firing two Nd:YAG lasers into it, injection seeded with titanium oxide particles to allow reconstruction of the flow as a holographic image using a single Nd:YVO4 laser, with a wavelength matching the recording laser, at 532 nanometres.

The research team has successfully applied the system to reacting and non-reacting propane jet flows, reports *Aerospace America*, the journal of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. The ultimate aim is to record images on holographic film to play it back as a three-dimensional holographic film. □



## Patria fills Saab void with Embraer work

SONACA OF BELGIUM is to outsource production of some of the front and rear fuselage sections it manufactures for the Embraer RJ-145 to Patria Finavicom of Finland, which has been hit by closure of Saab 2000 production. The last components for Saab will leave its plant in Halli, Finland, later this year. The company says that Sonaca signed the co-operation agreement to cope with increasing demand from Embraer, which intends to increase the production rate to six a month by May.