

**WORKSHOP**

**++ GE Engine Services** has signed a 10-year contract, potentially worth as much as \$1 billion, with **Continental Airlines** to overhaul CFM International CFM56 engines powering the carrier's Boeing 737s, and the CF6s which power its Boeing 767s and McDonnell Douglas DC-10s. **++ Royal Nepal Airlines** has awarded Beijing-based **Aircraft Maintenance and Engineering (AMECO)** a three-year contract to overhaul its Rolls-Royce RB211-535E5 engines. The first engine was delivered to AMECO in April. The Nepali carrier's Boeing 757s have already undergone C-checks in China at the Guangzhou Aircraft Maintenance Engineering centre. **++ CEF Industries** has selected **DRS** of Milwaukee and its **Derco Aerospace** subsidiary to provide repair and distribution services for its range of aircraft components. **++ AEM** has won a contract from **Virgin Atlantic Airways** to overhaul flap carriages for its Boeing 747 fleet. **++ KLM** has signed a two-year agreement with **Gulf Aircraft Maintenance (GAMCO)** for technical ground handling of its Boeing 767s moving through Abu Dhabi. **++ Hong Kong Aero Engine Services (HAESL)** has been retained for a five-year term by **Malaysia Airlines** for repair and overhaul of the Rolls-Royce Trent 800 engines which power its Boeing 777 fleet. **++ Shannon Aerospace** has been awarded a contract by **AB Airlines** to prepare the Boeing 737-300s it is leasing from Ansett Worldwide. The work includes reconfiguring the aircraft for a two-class layout, a new colour scheme and a maintenance check. In a separate deal, **FLS Aerospace** has signed a six-year contract with **ABAirlines** for the spares support and maintenance of its growing 737 fleet. Initially, the maintenance deal will cover two 737-300s with options to expand to six new 737-700s as they are introduced by the London Gatwick-based airline into service after the early months of 2001. The contract could be worth around £10 million.

# Aer Lingus extends its Airbus fleet at the expense of 737s

MAX KINGSLEY-JONES/LONDON

**A**ER LINGUS has taken a step closer to operating an all-Airbus fleet with its decision to order six A320s to add to its orders for the larger A321 and its fleet of five A330s. The new aircraft will result in its Boeing 737 fleet being further reduced.

The airline revealed the move as it took delivery of the first of three CFM International CFM56-5B-powered A321-200s which are being taken on seven-year operating leases from International Lease Finance. A further three A321s, ordered directly from Airbus, will be delivered in 1999.

Aer Lingus also confirms the

order placed in February for a single General Electric CF6-80E1A4-powered A330-200 for delivery in 1999.

The carrier has long been an operator of the 737, and has in service six 737-400s and nine smaller-500s. The new A321s are being used to boost capacity on high density routes to London.

Aer Lingus chairman Bernie Cahill says that the airline is targeting 15% growth for the route next year. The A321s will replace 737-400s, which are in turn being redeployed on to the 737-500 routes serving continental Europe. Disposal of all but two of the 737-500s is expected.

The 737-400s will in turn be

deployed on continental European routes in place of smaller 737-500s, and the -500 fleet is likely to be reduced by up to four aircraft over the next 18 months, according to the airline.

The -400s are due to be replaced by A320s as the new aircraft are delivered between early 2000 and 2002, while the future of the remaining -500s has not yet been determined. "It will depend on the market conditions. We want to keep our fleet plans flexible," says the Irish carrier.

Meanwhile, the airline's Spanish charter airline associate, Futura, will sublease two Aer Lingus 737-400s to operate during its 1998 summer season. □

## AlliedSignal APU cleared for use on A320 family

**A**LLIEDSIGNAL HAS received US Federal Aviation Administration approval to produce its 131-9(A) auxiliary power unit (APU) for the Airbus Industrie A320 family.

Programme manager Lee Jacobs says that deliveries of the 131-9(A) are scheduled to begin in September.

"We have firm orders for close to 50 aircraft and almost 50 options so far". Customers include Leisure

International Airways, which is planning to take early examples through a retrofit programme, and Aer Lingus.

AlliedSignal considers approval of the 131-9(A) a vital step in its battle with Sundstrand's Auxiliary Power International (APIC). The APIC APS 3200 has won several large Airbus narrowbody orders and has in some cases been retrofitted in place of AlliedSignal's current 36-300(A) APU.

Airbus, meanwhile, plans to raise the maximum cruising altitude of its corporate jet, the A319CJ, to 41,000ft (12,500m) following successful cold weather start tests of the APU.

The 131-9(A) is internally identical to the earlier members of the 131 family developed for the Boeing Next Generation 737 and MD-90, and will become AlliedSignal's standard APU on the A320 family. □



## Palestinian expands with Boeing 727-200 acquisition

**PALESTINIAN AIRLINES** HAS acquired an ex-Istanbul Airlines Boeing 727-200Adv in a deal arranged by UK consultancy Gamit. The 20-year-old aircraft will be introduced following overhaul in Shannon, joining a fleet of two Fokker 50s and a leased 727-100. The airline, which was set up in 1996, operates regional services from El-Arish in northern Egypt while it awaits the opening of an airport in Gaza. It eventually plans to serve points in Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.