FLIGHT International, 23 February 1980

Cruise missile tests completed
THE production order for the US air-
launched cruise missile (ALCM) is
expected to be issued by mid-April
following completion of the 20th
flight-test on February 8, nearly six
weeks later than scheduled. A General Dynamics AGM-109 finished the fly-off series against the Boeing AGM-86B leaving the score at four AGM-109 crashes out of 10 flights with the AGM-86B crashing three times plus one unscheduled termination. The latter was caused by the chase air-craft failing to maintain its telemetry safety link with the missile which automatically failed safe, and released its recovery parachute.
Recommendations on the choice of design and assessment of production capabilities and costs will now be sent to Air Force Secretary Hans Mark Who will decide which system is to be adopted. His decision will be known by the end of March. Defence Secretary Harold Brown is expected to give his approval two weeks later. Despite the delays in the fly-off— the last being due to bad weather— it is expected that the first squadron of G model B-52s, equipped with 12 missiles per aircraft, is expected to be operational, on schedule, at Griffiss Air Force Base, New York, in December 1982.
Production of the selected ALCM

will run to 3,418 units. Provision for 225 missiles has been made in this

fiscal year at a cost of $364 million. Each of the next two fiscal years will have 480 ALCMs delivered at a cost of $544 million and $501 million respectively. In the meantime the Air Force will begin research and develop-ment of an advanced ALCM to counter the anticipated improvements in Soviet air defences of the 1990s. This project has had $25 million allocated this year. This will be fol-lowed by allocations of $26 million in 1981 and $50 million in 1982.

The Joint Cruise Missile Project Office (JCMPO) is considering three production options for the ALCM. Option one is that the winning com-pany will be the sole source; option two is the competition winner to be prime source with the loser helping in ALCM production and option three calls for the winner to be assisted in production by a company other than the loser, in case the loser does not wish to continue. Current US indus-trial speculation is that the Boeing AGM-86B will be selected and General Dynamics will be the sub-contractor.
• The USAF is continuing with re-
search and development on a future cruise missile carrier aircraft. This

project has received $13 million in
1979 and $30 million this year.

The Israeli Air Force has converted at least one of its Boeing 707 aircraft to the Electronic Intelli-gence role. Main differences from standard are the side looking air radar on each side, wing tip aerials, an omni-directional fin radome and numerous blade aerials. The aircraft appears to be similar in function to the USAF's RC-I35V except for the nose radome, which remains standard

Freedom of safety information
will in future be in a strong position
to defend the RAF low-flying acci-
dent rate, which has become the sub-
ject of much media attention in the
UK. Almost every accident now gets reported as "RAF low-flying", but in fact—as pointed out in the Flight leader of February 2—the last civilian to be killed by an RAF aircraft on a low-flying exercise was the pilot of a crop-spraying Pawnee hit by a Phan-tom in 1974. Says an RAF officer: "The risk to people on the ground

continued

from aircraft flying overhead is very small indeed—ten civilians have been killed in the past ten years in the United Kingdom by military aircraft, including three in 25 accidents last year."
The UK military accident record in 1979 was not the best, it is admitted; but the RAF accident rate was 0-52 per ten thousand hours compared with 0-51 in 1978. In the period from 1969 to 1978, 26,789 pedestrians were killed on UK roads.

545

UK Blowpipe purchase
THE UK Ministry of Defence has placed a £20 million contract with Shorts of Belfast for the purchase of additional Blowpipe man-portable surface-to-air missiles for Britain's Territorial Army (TA). Blowpipe is already in service with the Regular Army, the Royal Marines and three Royal Artillery TA Regiments. The additional purchase will equip a further 12 Blowpipe detachments. Blowpipe is a shoulder-launched com-mand to line-of-sight weapon. The Territorial Army is composed of civilian volunteers and can be called upon to reinforce regular full-time Army units.

Tracer...
Lockheed-Marietta has received a $5-9 million contract from the US Air Force to procure long lead items for the C-5A wing modification pro-gramme. The 77-strong Galaxy fleet is due for the wing retrofit by 1987. Each aircraft will then have a 30,000hr service life. Lockheed is at present fatigue-testing one set of wings and a C-5A is now being fitted with another set for flight-testing later this year.

Iraq has ordered an additional batch of 24 Mirage F.ls. The Iraqi Air Force already has 36 of this type on order and deliveries are due to start early next year.

Teledyne is developing a large, high-altitude, high-speed target designed for use with the Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile (Amraam). The US Air Force has just awarded a $38 million full-scale development con-tract for the 204in-long, 40in-wingspan target. The US Navy will test proto-types.

Gates Learjet has demonstrated the Sea Patrol Learjet in Australia. The country is seeking a suitable surveil-lance aircraft to patrol its vast coast-line. The Royal Australian Air Force may buy four to six Learjet 50s for duties including target towing, search and surveillance, VTP transport and photogrammetric survey. The roles have become vacant following retire-ment of RAAF Dakotas.

Casualties

The pilot was killed when a Royal Air Force Hunter of 2 Tactical Weapons Unit, RAF Lossiemouth, crashed on the Isle of Skye on Feb-ruary 12. The aircraft was on a weather reconnaissance flight.

Two crew were killed when a US Navy KA-3B Skywarrior crashed on approach to Patuxent River on Jan-uary 27. The aircraft came down in a ploughed field and skidded into a wood.