



Third EH.101 flies

The third EH.101 prototype (foreground), the first civil version of the Anglo-Italian helicopter and the second to be built by Westland, joined the nine-aircraft development programme on September 30. The aircraft is the first triple-turbine EH.101 to be powered by uprated

General Electric CT7-6 turboshafts. The first two prototypes, one built by Westland (background) and one by Agusta, are powered by GE T100s. This latest prototype will be used in the civil certification programme. Naval and utility EH.101s are also being developed.

EFA radar choice nears

By Lee Paddon

As Eurofighter prepares its EFA radar recommendation, both GEC-Marconi and Ferranti International have reached significant milestones in related airborne radar programmes.

The two companies are in rival consortia bidding for the £1 billion EFA radar contract, which both claim will be crucial to the future of their airborne radar capability.

Eurofighter will make its recommendation to the Nato European fighter management agency (Nefma) within the next few weeks. As the radar is a Class A item, Nefma will then pass the findings on to the four EFA nations, who will discuss it on a multilateral level. Their decision will be passed back to Eurofighter. According to Eurofighter, the nations have "quite a few weeks" to make this decision, without delaying the programme.

Marconi, meanwhile, has moved into the acceptance phase of its stage one upgrade to the Royal Air Force Tornado interceptor's Foxhunter radar. Flight tests of the upgraded radar started at British Aerospace Warton in June. Three development sets have been delivered, and acceptance flying started at the beginning of

September and is due to continue to the end of the year. The first production set, for Saudi Arabia, was delivered to BAe at the end of September.

Deliveries of 76 stage one production radars to the RAF will begin in April, and it is intended to retrofit 124 existing Foxhunters with the new upgrade, which is fundamentally a software "tweak" to increase automation and enhance close-combat modes, and contains little new hardware. Marconi now claims to be delivering radars faster than BAe is turning out Tornados. The company says it has caught up with the backlog: "there are no more 'Blue Circles' out there," (a reference to the concrete carried in the nose of Tornados delivered without radars).

Ferranti, meanwhile, is claiming that results from flight tests of its Blue Vixen radar for the Sea Harrier vindicate its "right first time" design philosophy. On the first sortie of the shake-down phase, the prototype radar successfully demonstrated its most complex air-to-air mode, namely medium pulse-repetition frequency, the company says.

In a pointed reference to Marconi's rival MSD2000 EFA

radar bid, Ferranti claims that its radar, installed in a BAe125 testbed, has a computational throughput six times greater than that of the Hughes APG-65 on which MSD2000 will be based. Blue Vixen is the basis of Ferranti's ECR90 EFA radar bid.

"It confirms that the proposals for ECR90 can be met with confidence using the same technology and trials techniques for hardware and software development. Indeed, the library of data which already exists allows an immediate start on software development," says Ferranti radar sales manager Joey Gough.

Ferranti has used a new approach to developing Blue Vixen's signal processing software. Flight trials with the receiver/transmitter system in a One-Eleven testbed, provided raw radar data. The engineers could then design the processing software in the laboratory and verify its operation using this data before beginning flight trials of the complete system.

The company has also delivered two pre-production B models of its Blue Kestrel surveillance radar to Westland. The radar is to be used in the Royal Navy's EH.101 Merlin.

Belgium drops Rapport III

Belgium has dropped Rapport III as an option for its F-16 electronic countermeasures programme after spending BFr 1,300 million (\$33 million) developing the system. Two other submissions are now under study, from Litton and Electronique Serge Dassault (ESD), with a decision expected before the year's end.

Both Litton and ESD are offering to team with Belgium-based companies. Litton plans to join forces with Siemens' military division, based near Bruges, while ESD would link up with SAIT. Both would have to work with Sabca to integrate their systems with the F-16.

Escalating Rapport III costs forced the project, led by Loral, to be shelved. It was then taken up by the Israeli Air Force, which further developed the system at its own cost. Rapport III was successfully tested in battle, and has now been ordered by the Turkish Air Force. Belgian company Teamco had bought the production rights, expecting a decision in 1987, but this did not come.

Rapport III was a further development of Rapport II installed in Belgian Air Force Mirage 5s. The Service had a need for 108 systems, of which 52 would have been active and 56 passive.

Messier wins Airbus nose gear

After a tough battle, France's Messier-Hispano-Bugatti has been selected by British Aerospace to design, develop, and manufacture the Airbus A330/A340 nose landing gear.

The contract represents for MHB sales in excess of \$150 million over the life of the programme. The main landing gear for the A330/A340 went to Dowty Rotol and its US partner Cleveland Pneumatic.

Messier supplies all nose landing gears for the current A300, A310, and A320, and the main landing gear for the A300 and A310.