



Nimrod crashes at Canadian air show

A ROYAL AIR Force (RAF) British Aerospace Nimrod MR2 maritime reconnaissance aircraft with a crew of seven crashed into Lake Ontario during its display sequence at the Canadian International Air Show, Toronto on 2 September. There were no survivors. When the aircraft hit the surface, about 200 nose-down, it had just rolled its wings level and was pulling-up in the final stage of a wing-over to the left, the RAF has confirmed. The reason for the accident is not known and a full investigation has started. The aircraft was fitted with a flight data recorder and navy divers are working to recover it along with the aircraft wreckage. It's the second loss of a Nimrod this year.

'Nothing new' about F-22 overspending

REPORTS OF COST and Rweight overruns on the Lockheed Martin/Boeing F-22 are "nothing new", the manufacturing team says. A US Air Force review estimates that the \$10.5 billion engineering and manufacturing development programme will come in \$572 million over budget when it is completed in 2002.

Lockheed Martin points out that the overrun is "only" around 5% and that it will "essentially go away" when rephasing of the programme to adjust for Congressionally imposed funding cuts is completed later this year. The company says the overrun is being covered within the existing F-22 budget.

The overrun is blamed on a

slower than planned reduction in engineering manpower as the programme transitions to the manufacturing phase. Rephasing is a factor in this, and in supplier cost overruns, the company says. Additional costs were incurred when the USAF relaxed some performance requirements because of weight growth, and the team had to recalculate airframe loads.

According to the USAF, the F-22 is about 590kg over its 13,970kg target empty weight, but this includes an allowance of almost 230kg for weight growth during flight test, which Lockheed Martin hopes will not be required. Work continues to reduce weight, the company says. □

Japan plans thrust-vectoring engine trials

JAPAN'S TECHNICAL Research and Development Institute (TRDI) plans to equip its future fighter demonstrator engine with a thrust vectoring nozzle and has already begun ordering long lead components for the powerplant.

The TRDI is evaluating either equipping the XF3-400 engine with two-directional thrust deflection paddles or the more advanced 3600 axisymmetric nozzle, similar to that seen fitted to the Sukhoi Su-27 aircraft 711

and under development for Pratt & Whitney's Multi-Axis Thrust Vectoring programme.

Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industries (IHI) plans to begin assembling the 50kN (11,200lb)-thrust XF3-400 this fiscal year. The powerplant is based on IHI's F3-30 engine, but will be augmented and feature a new lightweight heat resistant bill of material to give an 8:1 thrust-to-weight ratio.

It will be used to power a twin-engine technology demonstrator

aircraft (TD-X), tentatively scheduled to fly in the year 2000. The TRDI hopes to secure funding to begin development of the TD-X programme in the next fiscal year 1996 budget.

The TD-X will form the possible basis for an indigenously-developed replacement aircraft for Japan's McDonnell Douglas F-15J fighter. The FI-X-designated stealth fighter is intended to provide Japanese aerospace industry with a follow programme to the Mitsubishi FS-X support fighter. □

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ TEAM TACKLES ERGM

Alliant Techsystems has teamed up with McDonnell Douglas to bid for a US Navy contract to develop the Extended Range Guided Munition (ERGM), or Hammer projectile, for the Naval Surface Fire Support programme. The ERGM is a 5in rocket-assisted ship-to-shore projectile, to be fired from a Mk45 gun, using global-positioning/inertial-navigation guidance.

SHORTS SUPPORT

Shorts has secured two support services contracts worth £74 million (\$115 million). The contracts, awarded by the UK Ministry of Defence for Royal Air Force Linton-on-Ouse and by a Middle East customer, cover the provision of a range of services including first, second and third line aircraft maintenance. The company has landed three Middle East support contracts in the last three months.

Boeing wins US Air Force radome deal

BOEING DEFENSE and Space Group is to begin construction in October of the first of four new radomes for the E-4B Advanced Airborne Command Post Aircraft under a \$8 million US Air Force contract.

The new 8m long, wedge-shaped radome has been designed to contain an extra high frequency antenna to enable communications with ground stations and other aircraft

through the Milstar secure satellite network. The triband radome will replace the current unit which houses two main communications antennas on top of the fuselage aft of the hump.

Two triband radomes of the same design have already been developed under subcontract to Rockwell for the company's Block IV upgrade of the E-4B. Both were delivered to Rockwell's modification site in

Shreveport, Louisiana for installation on the first two aircraft. Boeing subsequently won a separate contract for four more radomes. The contract also includes four radome modification kits and two fuselage modification kits which will be made by Boeing's Product Support Division in Wichita, Kansas.

The first radome and fuselage kits under the new contract will be delivered in early 1996. □