



The 1996 Farnborough Air Show opened on 2 September against a background of improving prospects, particularly in the civil sector. Airbus and Boeing are advancing their programmes to build the next generation of large airliners, and Bombardier, Rolls-Royce and Tupolev are among those celebrating early orders. The Eurofighter EF2000 and the thrust-vectoring Sukhoi Su-37 are likely to be the highlights of the flying display. Douglas Barrie, Andrew Chuter, Andrew Doyle, Forbes Mutch, Guy Norris and Graham Warwick report.

GE/P&W work out details of 747-X joint-venture plan

US ENGINE manufacturers General Electric and Pratt & Whitney have agreed many of the details of their 50/50 joint-venture agreement to produce powerplants for the Boeing new-generation 747-500/600X and Airbus Industrie A3XX.

The new company, to be known as the GE-P&W Engine Alliance, is to locate final assembly of its GP7000 engine series at P&W's East Hartford, Connecticut, plant.

The head of the company is Larry Scott, previously GE's CF6 programme manager. Under the original terms of the joint venture, it was agreed that the first president would be recruited from whichever manufacturer was not selected to

handle final assembly of the engine. Scott is to serve a three- or four-year term of office, before being replaced by a P&W manager in a pre-arranged rotation.

The GP7000 series covers a 334-378kN (75,000-85,000lb)-thrust range. The launch engine will be the GP7176 — a designation which represents the 7000 series; the first customer (Boeing) and a thrust of 338kN.

As expected, the alliance has opted for a 2.8m fan diameter. This is an increase on the original specification of 2.75m, and now matches the Trent 900 engine being developed by rival UK manufacturer Rolls-Royce.

GE will design and manufacture

the "hot" section, or high-pressure (HP) compressor, combustor and HP turbine of the GP7000; while P&W will supply the low-pressure section, using titanium hollow-blade technology.

The development team is already in position and is working to a 36-month development cycle. Final configuration of the first engine is expected to be in place by the end of 1996, with certification due at the end of 1999. The in-service date is late 2000.

It is understood that East Hartford was chosen over GE's manufacturing and test site at Durham, North Carolina, because there is adequate testing capacity at the P&W Connecticut plant. □

Swedes order three Sikorsky S-76C+ helicopters

HELIKOPTER SERVICE has ordered three twin-turbine Sikorsky Aircraft S-76C+ civil helicopters to upgrade services between Copenhagen International and the Swedish cities of Helsingborg and Malmö. The first two upgraded S-76s will be delivered to the Swedish company next March.

Deliveries of the uprated Turbo-

meca Arriel 2S1-powered S-76C+ began recently following US Federal Aviation Administration certification.

The first C+ aircraft was delivered in July to Norsk Helikopter. Eight S-76C+ rotorcraft have now been ordered. The last S-76C will be delivered this year.

Meanwhile, Sikorsky is continu-

ing work on the S-92 Helibus prototype. The first flight of the 19-passenger medium-lift helicopter is expected in 1998. Five S-92 prototypes will be built at Sikorsky's Stratford, Connecticut, plant. Certification of two models, the S-92C civil aircraft, and the S-92IU international utility (military) version is planned for the year 2000. □



Saab sells 2000s and gains 340 customer

SAAB AIRCRAFT HAS SOLD two further Saab 2000s to French carrier Regional Airlines and added an Egyptian customer to its list of Saab 340 operators. The 2000 deal boosts the French carrier's numbers of the type to seven — making it the second-largest operator of the aircraft, behind Crossair. The sale follows hard on the heels of the SAS Commuter purchase of four Saab 2000s which brought to an end an 18-month order drought. Saab has also placed an ex-Crossair 340A with Egyptian carrier Raslan Air Services, a charter carrier now operating Raytheon Beech Barons, King Air 90s and King Air 200s. The company is planning to take a second 340 later this year.