



Europe approves Global Express

BOMBARDIER RECEIVED European certification for its Global Express ultra long-range business jet on 7 May, around six months later than expected. The Joint Aviation Authorities award marks the third key type approval for the Global Express, following Canadian and US certification in July and November 1998, respectively. Sixteen aircraft are being completed at the company's Montreal and Tuscon, Arizona sites. The first is scheduled for delivery next month. More than 80 Global Express have been ordered.

MD Helicopters plans to double output after order bonanza

KATE SANSFIELD/LONDON

MD HELICOPTERS, the new owner of the former Boeing light civil helicopter line, plans to double production by 2001, following an escalation in orders for the MD500 series, MD600N and Explorer helicopters. "Sales have gone up vertically. The flood gates have opened since we took over the company as customers have regained confidence in this product once again," says MD Helicopters.

The Mesa, Arizona-based company, a subsidiary of European Industrial group RDM, is hoping to produce about 50 aircraft by the end of the year, increasing to 75 in 2000 and 100 aircraft a year in 2001.

The first MD-manufactured helicopter, an MD Explorer, is scheduled for delivery to the Mexican navy by the middle of this month, followed by delivery of the first MD-built 520N in September.

MD Helicopters is looking to transfer manufacture of the MD500/600/Explorer lines, which it acquired in January, to an adjacent site at Mesa's Falcon Field airport or another nearby airport, within 12 months. "Boeing is producing the machines under contract for a year, then we will have to find somewhere else," says MD Helicopters.

Boeing, which has retained ownership of the NOTAR anti-torque system and licence, is also contracted to provide technical and engineering support for the next five

years. "If we receive enough sustained orders in Europe we will probably set up an assembly site in Rotterdam, where our Dutch headquarters are based," adds MD.

To increase the competitiveness and drive up demand, MD Helicopters is reducing the price of its aircraft. The Explorer has been slashed by \$500,000 to \$2.95 million, while the other models' prices will be reduced moderately.

Meanwhile, MD Helicopters' Belgian-based distributor Heli Fly, snapped up by RDM last year, is setting up a European maintenance and customer support centre in Genk, near Halem. The company, which had bid for the MD Explorer line, has sold two Explorers to the Belgian Gendarmerie. □

AlliedSignal launches general aviation EGPWS

ALLIEDSIGNAL has extended its enhanced ground proximity warning system (EGPWS) product line with the launch of a compact system designed for the general aviation market. First deliveries of the GA EGPWS, which will cost less than \$10,000, are planned for early next year.

The new GA EGPWS, which will weigh about 0.68kg (1.5lb), will provide terrain protection for private and other GA aircraft. The system will generate a map-type picture showing the aircraft and nearby terrain, with terrain colour-coded based on its height relative

to the aircraft. The map can be displayed on any cockpit display system. A built-in global positioning system (GPS) will be offered as an option. The GA EGPWS provides most of the voice audio alerts provided by AlliedSignal's other EGPWS products.

The launch of the GA product means that AlliedSignal provides EGPWS for all aircraft types. The Mark IV EGPWS, at \$23,900, is designed for regional airliners and smaller business jets and turboprops, while the \$68,000 Mark V and VII EGPWS are for large air transport aircraft and business jets.

EGPWS is contributing to the reduction of controlled flight into terrain (CFIT) accidents. AlliedSignal says that EGPWS will support an 80% reduction in CFIT accidents over the next 10 years. Regional, business and air taxi aircraft suffer three times more CFIT accidents a year than air transport aircraft types, according to AlliedSignal. The US National Transportation Safety Board has recommended that the Federal Aviation Administration require within three years that all turbine-powered aircraft with six or more seats have EGPWS. □

Agusta brings Power to Greek hospitals

AGUSTA HAS secured a L35 billion (\$19 million) order from the Greek Government for five A109 Power helicopters. The twin-engined aircraft will be deployed by the National Centre for Emergency for emergency medical service (EMS) operations.

The Italian manufacturer has more than 130 orders for the Pratt & Whitney 206C-powered helicopter, which is becoming an increasingly popular addition to EMS fleets across the world, including orders from South Africa, Italy, Spain, France and the USA. Most recently, the A109 Power was selected by the UK's Automobile Association (AA) to complement its new air ambulance service. The aircraft is scheduled for delivery to the AA in the third quarter of the year.

Demand for the Power has driven Cascina Coasta-based Agusta to delay certification of its A119 Koala stablemate by up to a year. European approval is planned for July. In the interim, Agusta has made improvements to the \$1.7 million seven-seat light helicopter, following customer feedback.

Although these details have not been disclosed, the manufacturer is known to be enlarging the total flight envelope and increasing the cruise speed by 10kt (18km/h). The Pratt & Whitney PT6B-37-powered helicopter offers a maximum cruise speed of 140kt and a range of more than 650km (350nm). More than 40 orders have been clocked up so far. □

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ ARMENIAN SU-31

Sukhoi design bureau is looking at establishing a production line for its Su-31 sports aerobatic aircraft in Armenia. A delegation of senior Sukhoi representatives discussed the proposal with the Armenian prime minister Armen Darbinyan last month. Around \$7 million may be invested in the project by Sukhoi and outside investors.