



Enaer's clients for heavy C- and D-checks include Aerolineas Argentina's 737-200s

petitions in Greece and Israel. The basic option is an ADI retrofit, plus a new HSI and HUD. A more advanced option covers HUD installation, plus multifunction display, hands-on-throttle-and-stick, mission computers, stores management system, inertial navigation and GPS. Both options include new radio suites and air data computers. Other upgrade elements include installing the more powerful Honeywell TFE731-4 or -5 turbofan in place of the -2, and a higher-capacity main landing gear to absorb the greater loads of the heavier aircraft.

Upgrades of the elderly T-34s, some of which are based on the work recently completed on 30 air force aircraft, are also being offered to other nations. Manufacturing general manager Alberto Buthet says: "We are putting together proposals for upgrades to fleets in Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay. Some want just cockpit work done, but others want more, such as engine and structural updates, so we are working on a number of packages."

EXHAUSTIVE WORK

Overhaul and modification work on the air force T-34 fleet included an exhaustive damage tolerance and life extension test that was so

complete that LMAAS is offering it to the air force as a model for returning grounded aircraft to service. T-34s, used in relatively large numbers in the USA for aerobatics and simulated combat flying, were grounded throughout the Americas following a fatal crash caused by a main wingspar failure.

LMAAS' manufacturing ambitions are intimately linked to restarting Pampa production, but also extend to new work such as production of cargo-door kits for the parent company's L-1011-40 freighter conversion programme in Greenville, South Carolina.

This could become more significant for Cordoba if, as planned, the freighter line moves south from the USA following the sixth aircraft's completion. LMAAS is also talking to DaimlerChrysler Aerospace (Dasa) Airbus about setting up a Latin American A300/A310 cargo conversion line.

Taylor says: "With our lower labour costs – about half those of the German costs – we would enable Dasa to offer a lower cost for its conversion." As part of efforts to extend its links with the European aerospace company, LMAAS is also discussing potential Airbus A3XX work packages, such as doors.

Another vital area of growth is the company's engine overhaul, repair and test initiative. Building on its extensive site, LMAAS plans to expand quickly this year to include the JT8D for the 737-200, as well as the closely related J52 engine used in the A-4AR. Operations general manager Howard Atwood says: "Once we establish a regional presence with the JT8D, the next step will be to offer the same work on the CFM56." The company is upgrading test cells to take the more powerful GE/Snecma powerplant, and hopes to begin its first CFM56 overhaul in 2001.

Staple engine work for the plant, in the meantime, continues to be on engines for the Argentinian air force fleet. This includes the R-R Allison T56, Honeywell TFE731 and 85-71/72 and 85-90 auxiliary power units, as well as the Turboméca Astazou XVIG and Snecma ATAR 09C engines. As with the airframe and avionics, the wealth of equipment at the Cordoba site means that elaborate component repairs and overhauls are possible.

With such dramatic expansion plans in place, it seems LMAAS' dream to put Cordoba on the world's aerospace map is well on the way to becoming reality. □