NEWS CLIPS

Rolls-Royce Wins Saudi A330 Support

Rolls-Royce has won an order from Saudi Arabian Airlines to provide Trent 700 engines and TotalCare support for four Airbus A330s that the Middle Eastern carrier has on order. It also covers four options, should they be exercised. The deal could be worth up to $500 million. The aircraft, the order for which was already announced, are due to enter into service from 2013. They will join Saudi Arabian's existing fleet of eight Trent 700-powered A330s. TotalCare covers all Trent engines in service in the Middle East.

More Honeywell APUs To Power-Up GoAir A320s

Honeywell has extended its agreements with Indian low-fare airline GoAir for the installation and maintenance of Model 131-9A auxiliary power units on 10 more of the airline's new Airbus A320s. The agreement calls for Honeywell to install the new APUs between 2012 and 2014. It builds on the company's existing 10-unit APU contract with GoAir, and puts it in charge of APU maintenance across the entire GoAir A320 fleet until 2018.

The U.S. company claims its 131-9A will deliver GoAir a 3.4-percent fuel burn benefit and a 10-percent power advantage over competing APUs, while also allowing it to cool or heat the cabin two minutes faster.

GoAir has derated most of the APUs on its existing fleet, so it will now be able to achieve a total fuel burn benefit of 4.5 percent per aircraft duty cycle over its original settings, said Honeywell.

Matt Greene Heads New Safe Flight Department

Safe Flight Instrument (Stand E710) has announced that Matthew Greene, former vice president of marketing, has been appointed to head up the newly created program management department. In his new role, Greene will "help improve new product time-to-market," the White Plains, New York-based company said. He is also expected to "better align the company's growth objectives to meet customer and regulatory requirements." Safe Flight specializes in aircraft lift instrumentation (such as stall warning devices) and control systems (for example, autothrottles).

Satcom1 Launches SwiftBroadband Billing Plan

Satcom1 (Stand E774) has announced the launch of Flight Billing, a new Inmarsat SwiftBroadband-based billing program for charter, fractional and other business jet operators, as well as airlines. The systems has been developed to make passenger communications billing easier and more efficient, lessening the risk to providers of large communication charges by automatically charging usage on each flight to a specific customer, according to Satcom1.

Flight Billing does not require the installation of additional hardware on the aircraft and allows users to browse the Internet, access e-mails and send instant messages from their laptops, iPads, iPhones or other smartphones. On behalf of its customers, Satcom 1 will handle all billing and invoicing directly to the users.

According to the Danish company, billing for in-flight communications has tended to be inefficient and labor-intensive because operators have to work out which passengers should be charged for particular services. It believes that this, plus concerns over incurring high charges, has discouraged the use of satellite communications on board aircraft.

MEBA 2012 Moves To Dubai World Central Airport

Next year's Middle East Business Aviation (MEBA) show will take place at Dubai's new Al Maktoum International Airport in Jebel Ali, Dec. 11 to 13, 2012, and organizer Fairs & Exhibitions is taking bookings on Stand W816 here at the Dubai Air Show. The 2010 MEBA event, which was staged here at Dubai Airport Expo, attracted 338 exhibitors and 6,200 visitors, while 53 business aircraft were present in the static display. F&E produces MEBA every other year on behalf of the Middle East Business Aviation Association (MEBAA). In a recent forecast, MEBAA predicted the number of business aircraft in the Middle East would grow from 453 today to 1,330 by 2019. F&E has indicated that the Dubai Air Show also will be moving to Al Maktoum International for the 2013 event.

With the success of its AW139 here in the Middle East, AgustaWestland has high hopes for two developmental follow-on models, the AW169 and the AW189.

AgustaWestland looks to AW139 follow-ons

by Paolo Valpolini

AgustaWestland (Stand C420) hopes that the sales success of its AW139 helicopter bodes well for the two new models destined to join its product family. With both the AW169 and AW189 due to make maiden flights in mid-2012, the company has come to Dubai confident that it can further build its worldwide order book. To date, 580 AW139 sales have been achieved, with 450 units having been delivered.

The European manufacturer estimates an overall market for the AW139 category of helicopter at 900 aircraft over the next 20 years, while it believes 900 to 1,000 units of the AW169 will be sold. It believes the overall potential market for the AW189 is around 600 aircraft in the same period.

Much of the hope for future success is being pinned on a new family concept based on commonality between models. Many features are common to all three models: main- and tail-rotor clearance; increasing safety, especially when operating in secluded areas with people around the helicopter; and the need to clear obstacles on the ground. A high power-to-weight ratio was also considered from the beginning to allow Cat A operations at maximum take-off weight in the widest possible operating envelope.

Tiered Capabilities

Looking at the passenger and range capacities, it is possible to see how the three helicopters are aligned: the AW169 is able to transport eight passengers more than 150 nm; the AW139 can take 12 passengers out to distances greater than 250 nm; and the AW189 is able to carry 16 passengers more than 300 nm. Trading passengers for fuel, the AW189 can carry 12 people 400 nm.

The reduced D value (the aircraft's largest dimension with rotors turning), despite the considerable volumes and load capacity, is also a plus when operating from confined areas as well as from helipads and oil drilling helidecks, where the smaller the D value, the higher the safety. The D-value was considered a priority design parameter from the outset, with an increase of less than one meter when passing from the 6.5-metric-ton AW139 to the 8-metric-ton AW189.

The cabin design also followed the same philosophy based on a flat ceiling and floor. The cabin volume runs from 222 cu ft in the AW139 through 282 cu ft in the A169 right up to 395 cu ft for the largest AW189 model. Cabin height in the AW139 is 4 feet 4 inches, while for the other two family members it is 4 feet 8 inches.

Flexible Configuration

The flat floor allows easy loading of mission modules that have been developed to fit all three models. The conventionally shaped cabins allow the AW139 and AW189, in particular, to accommodate numerous seating configurations. Passenger seat structure remains identical in the types while padding can change according to the available space. For oil and gas operations, all layouts have seats aligned and rows aligned with emergency exits. Large doors–five feet, two inches wide in the AW169 and five feet six inches wide in the AW139 and 189–provide easy accessibility.

Further important commonality is found in the cockpit; the two latest products from AgustaWestland are based on the AW139 and will feature the same eight- by 10-inch multifunctional displays found in that model. This should make training easier, as each model offers the same touch and feel, and same procedural approach, thus enhancing safety and reducing training time. Similar commonality also applies to maintenance, with the overall result being a reduction in operating costs. ❑

ACTION AVIATION BECOMES NEXTANT 400XT SALES AGENT

Nextant Aerospace has appointed business aircraft sales group Action Aviation as the exclusive sales agent for the Nextant 400XT light business jet in the Middle East, India and Europe. Action Aviation, which is displaying the new aircraft at the Dubai Air Show, has offices in Dubai, the UK and Bangalore, India.

The $4 million 400XT was certified in the U.S. this year and first deliveries took place last month. Its range is just over 2,000 nm with four passengers. Maximum cruise speed is 460 knots.

The aircraft is a remanufactured Hawker Beechjet 400/400XP with all of its life-limited components brought back to zero-time status. It features new Williams FJ44-3AP engines, a Rockwell Collins Pro Line 21 avionics suite in the cockpit and high-speed wireless Internet in the remodeled passenger cabin. The aircraft also are repainted. –*T.D.*

Nextant 400XT

DAVID McINTOSH