

Dee Howard revises 727 Tay conversion

BY GRAHAM WARWICK
IN ATLANTA

Dee Howard, the Alenia subsidiary based in San Antonio, Texas, has made aerodynamic and engineering revisions to its Rolls-Royce Tay engine conversion for the Boeing 727. This follows testing in Boeing's windtunnel in Seattle. Dee Howard and Rolls-Royce have engineered the conversion for parcels carrier United Parcel Service (UPS), which has orders for 40 with options on another 40, but Alenia has started to market a similar 727QF (quiet freighter) to other operators.

Atilio Galasso, vice-president engineering at Dee Howard, says that the latest changes have reduced the total drag of the Tay 727 to a figure "almost identical" to that of the original Pratt & Whitney-powered aircraft. Strakes have been added to the sides of the engine nacelles and to the underside of the rear fuselage; the chord of the engine pylon has been increased and its upper rear profile flattened; and the engines have been canted down by 1.5°.

Galasso says that the strakes

were necessary to maintain — or slightly improve — the aerodynamic characteristics of the 727 at high angles of attack. In fact, he says, the minimum control speed of the aircraft will now be lower than before, helped by the fact that the thrust-reverser/nozzles on the two outboard engines are canted outwards slightly, bringing the thrust line closer to the centreline.

Dee Howard marketing director Giacomo Mayer says that the first flight of the re-engined 727 — "a most significant milestone" — is still due for late March/early April 1992, and that the company is working three shifts, seven days a week to achieve that goal. It is working simultaneously on the first two conversions for UPS, and is also continuing with cockpit upgrades, using Rockwell Collins avionics on the UPS 727 fleet.

■ Dee Howard has completed 300h of test-flying of its other Tay re-engineering project, the BAC One-Eleven 2400, and is aiming for certification by the end of 1991. At the end of October, the new thrust reverser was deployed for the first time on one of the two prototypes. □

SIA prospects good, despite downturn

Singapore Airlines saw interim profit slip marginally to S\$530 million (\$265 million) after tax, compared with S\$532.7 million in the six months through September 1990. This slight downturn, however, combined with a 5% growth in turnover to S\$2.6 billion, is a remarkable performance compared with those of the majority of the world's airlines this year.

Capacity increased 9.6% in the half-year, and traffic more than 8%. This caused a slight decline in load factor to 71.3%. Staff costs jumped 20% and fuel costs nearly 14%. Depreciation charges leaped 21% on the introduction of nine new aircraft.

Michael Tan, deputy managing director, said the carrier is taking "deliberate action" to slow the continuing growth in staff, and constantly seeks higher productivity.

Some ancillary operations, such as accounting and computing, may be moved offshore, Tan says. Aircraft maintenance is already set to be spun off into a separate company, SIA Engineering, by early 1992.

Executives and analysts in Singapore are looking for a better second half.

Tan says that advance bookings already indicate higher demand, though sluggishness in the US economy is still a depressing factor. □



FIRST PROPELLERS FOR SAAB 2000

Dowty has delivered the first set of all-composite propellers for the Saab 2000, which will roll out next month. Optimised for low noise and high efficiency at cruise speed, the propeller has six swept blades and is electronically controlled by a full authority digital engine control system. Propeller diameter is 3.8m.

UA picks Indianapolis for Boeing maintenance site

United Airlines has selected Indianapolis as the site for a \$1 billion Boeing 737 maintenance centre to be opened in late 1994.

Indianapolis was selected in preference to Denver, Louisville and Oklahoma City after offering United \$291 million in financial incentives. The centre will employ up to 7,000 people and maintain United's planned fleet of 300 737s.

Minnesota, meanwhile, has offered Northwest improved financial incentives to build an Airbus A320 maintenance centre at Duluth and an engine overhaul base at Hibbing. After talks on

the original \$790 million package fell through, Northwest said it would consider up to 40 locations across the USA.

Delta Air Lines, which was to choose between former eastern bases at Atlanta and Miami to maintain 21 Airbus A310s acquired from Pan Am, has decided to contract maintenance to Swissair in Zurich while it continues searching for a site.

Nine US cities submitted bids in mid-September to host McDonnell Douglas' proposed MD-12 assembly line. They include Fort Worth, Texas, which is bidding to build the stretched MD-11 at Alliance Airport. □

Air Algeria losses force restructure

BY ALAN GEORGE

Persistent losses have forced Algerian flag-carrier Air Algerie to restructure its management and may postpone fleet-renewal plans.

Losses in 1990 totalled \$64 million and are expected to reach \$36 million this year. As a result of the devaluation of the local currency, the airline's debts have trebled to 9 billion dinars (\$402 million) in the past year.

In September, the transport minister fired the airline's senior

management and installed a 15-member committee of company officials in its place. Last month, the airline's pilots went on strike for a 200% pay claim. □

NEWS IN BRIEF

DERCO DEAL

Derco Industries has been named by the Air Maze Corporation (AMC) as export distributor for AMC's fluid filters and components for the Lockheed C-130 Hercules.