Bell Boeing Completes CV-22 Critical Design Review

The Bell Boeing CV-22 Osprey tiltrotor program successfully completed its Executive Critical Design Review this week. It was the final in a series of 12 design reviews, which began last June for the U.S. Air Force version of the Osprey.

In addition to Naval Air Systems Command, U.S. Air Force participants included U.S. Special Operations Command and Air Force Special Operations Command, Fla.; Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.; and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

The Bell Boeing/U.S. government team was complimented on its positive effort and achievement.

"I have never seen a program that was this far along with flight test planning at this stage of development," said John McKeown, Design Review Board Chairman.

Next for the program, aircraft No. 7, one of the engineering and manufacturing development (EMD) airplanes, will undergo modification starting in April 1999 leading to a first flight in October. Aircraft No. 9 will begin remanufacture to a production representative CV-22 in May of next year, with first flight in May 2000.

The CV-22 is the first variant of the U.S. Marine Corps MV-22. Its unique features include additional fuel tanks in the wing for extended range of about twice that of the MV-22, a multi-mode radar for terrain following/terrain avoidance flight, more sensors, radar jamming equipment and a suite of integrated radio frequency countermeasures. It will also have an installed refueling probe, a third seat in the cockpit for the Air Force special operations flight engineer and two and a half times more volume of flare and chaff. The CV-22 will replace the MH-53J helicopter and augment the MC-130 fleet in Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), Hurlburt Field, Fla.

The four EMD Ospreys, aircraft Nos. 7-10, completed developmental envelope expansion this summer, achieving numerous milestones such as a 3.9 G load factor at 260 knots, 60,500 pounds maximum takeoff gross weight, 25,000 feet in altitude, a maximum speed of 342 knots, night flights using night vision goggles and external loads of 10,000 pounds at 230 knots. Aircraft 9 and 10 completed operational testing in October.

Pilots with the Bell Boeing test team, along with the Multi-Service Operational Test Team, have flown more than 930 hours on the EMD aircraft. V-22s have flown more than 2,100 hours since first flight in March 1989. Sea trials are expected to begin in January 1999, followed by Operational Evaluation that begins in September 1999 and completes in May 2000.

The V-22 Osprey combines the vertical flight capabilities of a helicopter with the forward flight speed and range capabilities of a fixed-wing turboprop aircraft. Its multi-mission capabilities will serve both the Air Force and Marine Corps.

Long-lead funding for the first four CV-22 aircraft is expected to be in the FY 2000 budget. Full funding for these aircraft is expected to be in the FY 2001 budget. The first CV-22 is scheduled to go to AFSOC in 2003.

The Bell Boeing Tiltrotor Team, comprised of Bell Helicopter Textron in Fort Worth, Texas, and The Boeing Company in Philadelphia, developed the V-22 tiltrotor for the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy and U.S. Special Operations Command. Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc., is a wholly owned subsidiary of Textron, Inc. of Providence, R.I.

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