Lufthansa and Boeing Celebrate 25 Years of 747 Freighter Service

Aviation history reached another milestone today when Lufthansa Cargo AG and Boeing celebrated the 25th anniversary of the first 747 Freighter. The two companies held ceremonies at JFK International Airport to mark the aircraft's inaugural flight from Frankfurt to New York on April 19, 1972.

New York City Commissioner Irene Halligan was on hand to participate in a christening ceremony to name today's arriving 747 Freighter in honor of the City of New York, the carrier's most important North American gateway. This marks the first time a Lufthansa aircraft has been named in honor of a city outside of Germany.

Upon arrival, the aircraft was greeted by JFK International Airport fire trucks with a traditional water cannon salute as it taxied to its parking position.

Among the 250 guests and dignitaries attending the ramp-side ceremonies were: Wilhelm Althen, Lufthansa Cargo chairman; Tom Basacchi, Boeing Commercial Airplane Group vice president; and Bob Kelly, Port Authority of New York/New Jersey director of aviation.

"Lufthansa Cargo is proud to have been the launch customer of the Boeing 747 Freighter," Althen said. "Not only has it helped to propel Lufthansa Cargo into market leadership, but it has also left an indelible mark on the history of modern aviation."

Currently, the carrier is ranked as the world's leading scheduled international air freight provider, offering the most capacity of any airline on the North Atlantic route.

"Lufthansa is one of a select group of airlines that has built a truly global network with a level of service that sets a world-class standard," Bassachi said. "We're proud that the 747 has contributed in part to the great success achieved by Lufthansa Cargo."

This summer, Lufthansa Cargo will operate 34 weekly Boeing 747 all-freighter flights from 10 North American Gateways. The airline provides cargo services to more than 450 cities in 100 countries with regularly scheduled flights and road feeder service. Lufthansa Cargo AG is a wholly owned subsidiary of Lufthansa German Airlines. Last year, the carrier transported 1.6 million metric tons of freight and mail worldwide.

Boeing continues to be the world leader in civilian air cargo. The Boeing 747 provides 31 percent of the world's freighter fleet capability. The first 747 Freighter could easily carry 100 tons (90,000 kilograms) across the Atlantic Ocean or across the United States. Starting in 1972, Boeing delivered 73 of the 747-200 Freighters.

Boeing first offered all the advances of the 747-400 in an all-cargo configuration in 1989. The -400 Freighter can carry 26 more tons (23,590 kilograms)of cargo or fly 1,200 nautical miles farther than its predecessors.

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