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The U.S. Navy has ordered a third Boeing 737-700C for its Navy Unique Fleet Essential Airlift Replacement Aircraft (NUFEA-RA) program. The Navy ordered two 737-700Cs last September with an option to purchase a third, and is now exercising that option.

The contract, valued at \$163 million, calls for deliveries to the Commander Naval Air Reserve Forces to begin in December 2000.

The 737-700C, designated the C-40A, will be used to replace the Navy's aging fleet of C-9 aircraft used for worldwide, short notice transportation of military personnel and cargo. The C-9 fleet consists of 29 aircraft, 27 of which are flown and maintained by Naval Reserve Components. The remaining two aircraft are assigned to the U.S. Marine Corps.

"The C-40A will help the Navy meet its goal to increase the versatility, reliability and maintainability of its airlift fleet," said Mark Rogers, C-40A program manager for Boeing. "We're working closely with the Navy to make this program another successful example of acquisition reform. The Navy will purchase these airplanes as any airline would, using commercial standards."

The 737-700C is a freighter/passenger derivative of the Boeing Next-Generation 737 aircraft. The 737-700C will set standards in its class with payload capacity of 38,500 pounds, cruise ceiling of 41,000 feet and cruise speed of Mach .78 to .82.

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