Engineering and Manufacturing Development MV-22 Osprey Aircraft Pass 1,000 Flight Hours

The four engineering and manufacturing development (EMD)V-22 Ospreys just passed 1,000 flight hours while aircraft No. 10 continues flight tests aboard the USS Saipan off the Virginia coast. Each of the EMD airplanes has logged more than 200 flight hours. V-22 tiltrotor aircraft have flown more than 2,200 hours including full scale development testing.

Sea trials using the production representative, or EMD V-22, began this month and will last until mid-February. A comprehensive operational evaluation begins in September 1999 and ends in May 2000. Low rate initial production (LRIP) of the MV-22 began in 1997 and the first of the 29 LRIP aircraft will deliver in May. Full-rate production will begin with Lot 5 in 2001. Four LRIP aircraft, numbers 11-14, are scheduled for delivery to the U.S. Navy this year.

The four EMD Ospreys, aircraft numbers 7-10, completed developmental envelope expansion in the summer of 1998. They achieved such milestones 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, formation flying and external loads of 10,000 pounds at 230 knots. Aircraft 9 and 10 completed operational testing in October 1998. Aerial refueling has been demonstrated using dry plugs. Initial sea trials were flown aboard the USS Wasp in December of 1990 using two full scale development V-22.

The CV-22 to be used by the U.S. Special Operations Forces will be the first variant of the U.S. Marine Corps MV-22. Its unique features will include additional fuel tanks in the wing for extended range of more than 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. Fifty of the CV-22s will replace the MH-53J helicopter and augment the MC-130 fleet in Air Force Special Operations Command, based at Hurlburt Field, Fla. Later this year the Bell Boeing Tiltrotor Team will begin converting two V-22 Ospreys to a configuration similar to the CV-22 which the Air Force will test in the year 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 U.S. Air Force and U.S. Marine Corps. Long-lead funding for the first four CV-22 aircraft is expected to be in the president's FY 2000 budget submission. Full funding for these aircraft will be in the FY 2001 budget.

The Bell Boeing Tiltrotor Team, comprised of Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc., 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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