Boeing Licenses Bomb Rack Technology to Sargent Fletcher

The Boeing Company has selected Sargent Fletcher Inc., of El Monte, Calif., as licensee for its new pneumatic ejection rack technology.

The license will allow Sargent Fletcher to design, produce and sell pneumatic ejection racks based on the Boeing patents, copyrighted technical data and know-how.

"The pneumatic ejection rack technology is an innovative solution that offers both high performance and low lifecycle cost," said Dave Swain, Boeing senior vice president of Engineering and Technology. "This partnership will allow us to better meet customer needs for this solution at a more affordable price."

Financial terms weren't disclosed. The term of the agreement is for a period of about 22 years.

Sargent Fletcher is the world's leading producer of auxiliary mission equipment such as external fuel tanks, special purpose pods and pylons. Its sister company, Flight Refuelling Ltd., is Europe's leading bomb-rack producer. Both companies are units of Cobham plc of Wimborne, England.

Engineers Ted Jakubowski and John Foster, both of the Boeing Phantom Works R&D division, invented Boeing's pneumatic ejection rack technology.

This technology has been incorporated into single- and multiple-place bomb ejection racks. The single-place bomb ejection rack has been flight tested on an F/A-18 aircraft. The multiple-bomb ejection rack was flight tested on an F-16 aircraft earlier this year at the U.S. Air Force's test range at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. It's currently being tested on an F-111 aircraft by the Royal Australian Air Force.

When bombs and weapons are ejected from aircraft, they must be effectively thrust through the airstream of the aircraft in order to avoid damaging the aircraft and to establish accurate trajectories to intended targets.

By using compressed air to activate the pistons and push the weapon through the air stream, pneumatic ejection racks have many advantages over traditional ejection racks, which use pyrotechnic cartridges.

In comparison to traditional racks, pneumatic racks are lighter and more reliable, eliminate the need for pyrotechnic cartridges and hazardous waste disposal, reduce the need for maintenance and spare parts, and have a longer life span.

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