Boeing Commemorates C-17 First Flight

Boeing officials and employees Friday commemorated the 10th anniversary of the first flight of the U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III cargo aircraft with special events at the main assembly building here.

The crew from that first flight, which occurred Sept. 15, 1991, was on hand to talk to employees. First-flight crew were: Bill Casey, Boeing chief pilot; Lt. Col. George London, U.S. Air Force pilot; Ted Venturini, Boeing chief loadmaster; and Henry Van De Graaf, Boeing flight test engineer.

The first C-17 flew for more than two hours from Long Beach Airport to Edwards Air Force Base to begin the developmental flight-test program. Since that time, the C-17 fleet has amassed more than 290,000 flight hours. Boeing has delivered 75 C-17s to the U.S. Air Force and four to the United Kingdom Royal Air Force. T-1, the first-flight aircraft, is a test airplane at Edwards Air Force Base. It has more than 5,000 flight hours.

Then McDonnell Douglas was selected to build the C-17 on Aug. 28, 1981. Full-scale engineering and development began in 1986, and assembly of the first airplane started in August 1988. C-17's have been used operationally since June 1993.

C-17's are based at Charleston Air Force Base, S.C.; McChord Air Force Base, Wash.; and Altus Air Force Base, Okla. The U.K. C-17's are based at RAF Brize Norton. C-17s will join the Mississippi Air National Guard in 2004 at Jackson. McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., also will be a home base for C-17's in the future.

Boeing will deliver 120 C-17s under the current contract, with deliveries continuing through 2004.

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