Boeing Completes Successful MMA Flight Demonstration Tour

Boeing [NYSE:BA] and its Multi-mission Maritime Aircraft (MMA) industry team recently completed a successful coast-to-coast tour of U.S. Navy bases with two functional mission system consoles equipped on a 737 Boeing Business Jet 2.

The team demonstrated to P-3 operators how a 737 MMA provides warfighters with a quantum leap forward in anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare and why it is the best solution to the Navy's need for a new maritime patrol aircraft.

"The primary goal was to let fleet operators experience the superior performance of the Next Generation 737 and to see firsthand the aircraft's suitability for the maritime patrol mission," said Tim Norgart, director, MMA Program, for Boeing. "The demonstrations were also intended to showcase the team's total system approach and to give operators a feel for the team's extensive experience at putting together large, complex systems and integrating numerous sensors into a total system."

Highlights of the flights included a maximum power takeoff and climb to 41,000 feet, manual reversion maneuvers (no hydraulics), maximum rate of descent (in excess of 10,000 feet per minute), tactical maneuvering at 200 feet, simulated single engine maneuvers, and a performance landing with a stopping distance of less than 2,000 feet.

"Whether cruising high altitude at almost 500 knots, or loitering a few hundred feet over the seas at 180 knots, this aircraft will get the job done," said Mike Bryan, Boeing test pilot. "When I saw the excited faces of the Navy pilots, and watched the maintenance crew clean off the salt water spray from the windscreen, I couldn't help but see the 737 MMA as a reality."

The 737 MMA demonstration team visited Naval Air Stations in Brunswick, Maine; Jacksonville, Fla.; Norfolk, Va.; Kaneohe, Hawaii; and Whidbey Island, Wash., conducting multiple flights and static displays of the aircraft and mission system consoles. At each site the demo team was inundated with questions about the airframe, engines, maintenance, training and the mission system.

Boeing and partners CFM International, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, and Smiths Aerospace are focused on winning the MMA prime contractor selection in early 2004.

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