Boeing Assembly of United Kingdom's Fifth C-17 Under Way

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] has begun assembling the fifth C-17 Globemaster III for the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force (RAF) at its C-17 manufacturing plant in Long Beach, Calif.

In 2006, Boeing and the UK Ministry of Defence signed a contract to expand the RAF's C-17 fleet from four aircraft to five. The UK plans to purchase the four C-17 aircraft it now leases from Boeing when that agreement expires in mid-2008.

"The fifth UK C-17 is very important to us and will greatly contribute to our operations around the world," said Tim Hockenhull, C-17 program manager/commercial manager with Defence Equipment and Support at the UK Ministry of Defence.

Hockenhull, joined by other RAF and UK Ministry of Defence officials, recently visited Boeing's C-17 plant to monitor the assembly process and the manufacturing improvements that have been made since receiving their fourth C-17 in 2001.

"This contract with Great Britain shows the ongoing and long-term commitment the Royal Air Force has made to the C-17. It also underscores the C-17's continuing value to our international customers," said Dave Bowman, vice president and C-17 program manager.

In September, Boeing will join together the aircraft's four major sections in preparation for the factory rollout in December. Its first flight is set for January 2008, with delivery tentatively scheduled for mid-February 2008.

The C-17 is the world's only tactical airlift aircraft with strategic capabilities. Capable of flying between continents and landing on short, minimally-prepared airfields, the C-17 does the work of multiple airlifters and is the most reliable, flexible and technologically advanced airlift aircraft ever built.

The U.S. Air Force's existing C-17 fleet has amassed more than 1.2 million flying hours, and in the global war on terrorism, has flown combat missions with record-setting reliability rates. With a payload of 160,000 pounds, the C-17 can take off from a 7,600-foot airfield, fly 2,400 nautical miles and land on 3,000-foot dirt runways. The C-17 also is a key component for providing quick and efficient humanitarian aid to the victims of natural disasters such as tsunamis, hurricanes and earthquakes.

Today in the U.S., C-17s are based at Charleston Air Force Base, S.C.; McChord Air Force Base, Wash.; the Air National Guard Base at Jackson, Miss.; McGuire Air Force Base, N.J.; March Air Reserve Base, Calif.; Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii; Travis Air Force Base, Calif.; Altus Air Force Base, Okla.; Dover Air Force Base in Delaware and Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska.

Boeing is on a multi-year production contract to design, build and deliver 190 C-17s to the U.S. Air Force through mid-2009. Boeing recently delivered the second of four C-17s to the Royal Australian Air Force. In early August, Boeing will deliver the first of four C-17s to the Canadian Forces.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses specializing in innovative and capabilities-driven customer solutions. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $32.4 billion business with 72,000 employees worldwide.
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