

Boeing Completes First KC-767 Tanker Night Refueling

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ST. LOUIS, Jan. 29, 2008 -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] made KC-767 program history Jan. 26 when one of its aircrews successfully transferred fuel from a KC-767 tanker aircraft to an F-15E at night -- the first nighttime refueling ever accomplished on a KC-767.

The new tanker, scheduled for delivery to Japan's Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) early this year, departed McConnell Air Force Base, adjacent to the Boeing Integrated Defense Systems Wichita, Kan., facility, and flew a 3-hour and 9 minute flight. Operating in the skies over Missouri, the aircrew connected the KC-767's fifth-generation, fly-by-wire boom (a telescoping tube used to deliver fuel to military aircraft) to an F-15E 11 times during dusk and night conditions and successfully offloaded fuel before returning safely. The company uses F-15E1 under a cooperative research and development agreement with the U.S. Air Force.

"Using our remote vision system, I was impressed with the quality of the picture and my ability to accurately see details of the F-15E and its refueling receptacle at night," said Rickey Kahler, Boeing KC-767 chief test boom operator.

The Japan KC-767 Tanker, a military derivative of the proven 767-200 commercial airplane, was selected over its competitor, the Airbus A-310, in a direct competition in 2001.

Its advanced boom builds on the aerodynamic shape and size of previous systems and provides more precise and responsive controls to the operator. With 2,600 fewer parts than previous booms, it also is easier to maintain.

"This milestone highlighted the KC-767's ability to perform refueling operations under all lighting conditions and demonstrated an upgrade to the lighting system we promised our Japan customer," said George Hildebrand, Boeing KC-767 Japan program manager. "Our next step is to complete the remaining Federal Aviation Administration certifications and deliver two new tankers to Japan early this year."

Boeing has built nearly 2,000 tankers in its history and is under contract to build four KC-767s for Japan. The JASDF has selected the convertible freighter configuration, which will provide flexibility in carrying cargo or passengers, while maintaining its primary role as an aerial tanker.

Boeing also is building four KC-767s for Italy with delivery of the first two tankers in the second quarter of 2008. To date, Boeing has logged more than 350 flights accumulating more than 1,000 flight hours on the KC-767.

In addition to flight-testing the KC-767 for international customers, Boeing is competing for a contract to replace the U.S. Air Force's KC-135 Tanker fleet. It has offered the KC-767 Advanced Tanker, and a decision is expected in the first quarter of 2008. Transferring fuel through a boom, via the remote vision system during nighttime conditions, will significantly reduce risk for future tanker customers like the U.S. Air Force.

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