FARNBOROUGH AIRSHOW DAY 2: NEW AIRBUS JETLINER ORDERS, AND MISSION TRAINING CAPABILITIES SPOTLIGHTED

News / Events / Festivals, Manufacturer

Underscoring Airbus leadership

Airbus continued its momentum during the Farnborough Airshow's second day, announcing orders, commitments and agreements for single-aisle and widebody jetliners that reached the triple-digits, while also focusing on the company's capabilities for mission-oriented training.

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New business revealed at the week-long UK aerospace gathering included another key endorsement for the A220 Family of jetliners, which has joined Airbus' single-aisle commercial aircraft portfolio. This endorsement came with a future U.S. airline start-up's commitment for 60 Airbus A220-300 versions, for deliveries beginning in 2021. The A220-300 is the A220 Family's longer-fuselage member, and will be used by the new airline that is backed by a group of experienced investors led by David Neeleman – the founder of JetBlue, investor in TAP in Portugal and controlling shareholder in Brazil's Azul airlines.

In another announcement at the Farnborough Airshow, Airbus' best-selling A320neo Family of single-aisle aircraft once again demonstrated its market leadership with a Memorandum of Understanding involving 25 A321neo and 75 A320neo aircraft for an undisclosed customer.

Also in the spotlight was Peach Aviation's decision to convert an existing order for two A320neo aircraft to the A321LR version – positioning this Osaka, Japan-based low-cost carrier to become Asia's first operator of the A320neo Family's long-range variant. The A321LR will enable Peach Aviation to open new routes from Japan to destinations at up to nine hours of flying time.

A321LR: "opening the door" to the mid-range market

Speaking at the morning Farnborough press conference announcing Peach Aviation's A321LR order conversion, Airbus Chief Commercial Officer Eric Schulz said the carrier's decision marked "an important day" for Airbus, noting the A320neo Family already has a strong market position in the low-cost carrier (LCC) segment – which continues to become increasingly important for the global air transport industry.

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“Peach Aviation’s decision proves what we have been thinking at Airbus for a long time: the A321LR further opens the door for us into the mid-range market, offering the best efficiency, lower cost and easiest solution for LCCs to enter the long-haul market,” Schulz explained.

Two announcements for Airbus widebody jetliners were made today at the Farnborough Airshow as well: an undisclosed customer’s agreement for the purchase of eight A350-900s; and the addition of two A330-200s for LEVEL – the International Airlines Group’s (IAG) low-cost long-haul airline brand.

The growing importance of commercial services

Airbus looks to bring even more value to its customers with increasing digital services and ambitions to triple its commercial services revenues in the next decade after an 18% annual growth in the past two years.

To achieve this, Airbus will leverage the unique capabilities of its Skywise aviation open data platform, as well as other new technologies (including the Internet of Things, virtual reality, augmented reality and artificial intelligence), according to Philippe Mhun, Airbus Senior Vice president - Customer Services.

Mhun said the company has identified four main axes for the development of its commercial aircraft services. They are: providing full lifecycle integrated services powered by Skywise, such as flight hour services; reinforcing Airbus’ strategic position in the value chain; expanding the scope from a specific fleet orientation to a multi-fleet offer; and extending services to a wider customer base via the increasingly ‘connected aircraft,’ using Airbus core competencies to drive market change and shape customer needs.

“Our focus is on offering services that optimise aircraft operational availability, streamline flight operations – and ultimately – enhance the passenger experience,” Mhun told reporters during a Farnborough Airshow press conference.

Airbus issues its latest Global Services Market Forecast

Worldwide, the commercial aircraft services market is forecasted by Airbus at US$4.6 trillion during the coming 20 years (2018-2037). To underscore the potential of this market, Mhun noted this figure is increasingly comparable to the overall value of new commercial aircraft that will be required in the air transport sector during the same period.

He pointed out that Airbus’ latest commercial aircraft Global Market Forecast – which covers the full spectrum of sizes from 100 seats to the very largest aircraft of over 500 seats – foresees the need of 37,400 new passenger and dedicated freighter aircraft from 2018 to 2037, for a combined value of $5.8 trillion.

Training future test pilots and engineers with H125 helicopters

Training is key to the operational capabilities of military and civilian flight testing, and Airbus’ ability to deliver solutions for this requirement was underscored by today’s Farnborough Airshow handover of an H125 helicopter for the UK Ministry of Defence’s Empire Test Pilot School (ETPS).

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The rotorcraft is part of a fleet of four H125s for ETPS, which trains test pilots and flight test engineers and operates under a partnering arrangement between the UK Ministry of Defence and the UK-based QinetiQ company.

Colin James, Managing Director of Airbus Helicopters UK, said the ETPS' H125s highlight Airbus' ability in the United Kingdom to deliver mission capabilities for military, law enforcement and security-sector customers. In meeting the ETPS' training missions, the H125s are being customised by Airbus Helicopters' UK design team – including the outfitting of a 3-axis autopilot integrated with the 'glass cockpit's' digital flight instrument displays; as well as installing dedicated communications equipment and traffic awareness systems.

Additionally, the aircraft will be equipped with a flight test instrumentation suite that transmits data in real time to the ETPS ground school at the Ministry of Defence's Boscombe Down facility, allowing the evaluation of both students and aircraft performance in both practical and class-based environments.

"Not only are we delivering a quality product, we're also ensuring that the H125s will be operated 'care free' by QinetiQ – day in and day out – backed the coverage of Airbus Helicopters' HCare support services package," James added. HCare is part of Airbus' increasing focus on services for the operators of its helicopters and aircraft – in both the military and civil sectors.

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