BOEING KC-46A TANKER JOINS FLIGHT TEST PROGRAM

News / Manufacturer

Boeing now has six aircraft in its KC-46 tanker test program, expanding its ability to complete ground and flight-test activities as it progresses toward first deliveries to the U.S. Air Force.

The newest KC-46 aerial refueling aircraft, the second low-rate initial production plane, completed its first flight April 29. Its test activities will help ensure the KC-46 can safely operate through electromagnetic fields produced by radars, radio towers and other systems.

“Adding another tanker will help us to become even more efficient and significantly improve our ability to complete test points going forward,” said Jeanette Croppi, Boeing KC-46A tanker test team director. “We are also re-configuring one of our 767-2C aircraft into a tanker, which means we soon will have four KC-46 tankers in test.”

“This first flight is another important step for the KC-46 program toward verifying the aircraft’s operational capabilities,” said Col. John Newberry, Air Force KC-46 System program manager.

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"Adding this aircraft brings key capabilities to the test fleet and helps move us closer to delivering operational aircraft to the warfighter."

To date, the program's test aircraft have completed 1,600 flight hours and more than 1,200 "contacts" during refueling flights with F-16, F/A-18, AV-8B, C-17, A-10 and KC-10 aircraft.

The KC-46 is derived from Boeing's commercial 767 airframe. The company expects to build 179 tankers in its Everett factory.

The KC-46A is a multirole tanker that can refuel all allied and coalition military aircraft compatible with international aerial refueling procedures and can carry passengers, cargo and patients.

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