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Cobham Receives First Airbus Military A330 for Conversion into RAF Voyager

BOURNEMOUTH, United Kingdom – Cobham has received the first of 12 Airbus Military A330-200 aircraft at its Bournemouth facility for conversion into “Voyager,” the Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft (FSTA) -- a variant of the A330 Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) -- for the Royal Air Force. This aircraft is the first to be converted by Cobham in the United Kingdom.

In recognition of this programme milestone, Cobham Aviation Services hosted an opening ceremony today for its newly refurbished A330 Conversion Centre at Bournemouth International Airport. Representatives from the UK Ministry of Defence, Airbus Military, AirTanker, and other key companies attended.



Air Marshal Leeson addresses attendees at opening ceremony for Cobham's new A330 Conversion Centre (Cobham image)

The Voyager conversion effort will create and maintain in excess of 100 direct jobs at Cobham into 2016, to be further increased through indirect jobs. The activity also provides an excellent opportunity to train graduates and apprentices and help prepare them for a career in aerospace engineering.

As part of the Voyager conversion, Cobham will install a pair of its fifth generation wing-mounted 905E aerial refuelling pods to all 12 aircraft; seven Voyagers will also be fitted for Cobham's 805E centre-line mounted fuselage refuelling units.

The first two Voyager aircraft underwent conversion at Airbus Military's facility in Getafe, Spain. In all, the RAF will operate a fleet of 14 Voyagers by the second half of this decade to replace its existing fleets of TriStar and VC10 aerial refuelling aircraft.

"Cobham looks forward to playing a key role in the AirTanker supply chain by providing and embodying its state-of-the-art air refuelling systems into the very capable A330 platform," said Des Taylor, general manager of Cobham Aviation Services. "Under this five-year contract, Cobham has created more than 100 new, high-tech jobs in the Bournemouth area, including graduates and apprentices, to ensure that the RAF receives a 21st Century in-flight refuelling capability."

Air Marshal Kevin Leeson, Chief of Materiel (Air), said:

"The conversions carried out at this tremendous new Cobham facility will turn Airbus A330s into the most capable military tanker transport aircraft of its type in the world. Today we celebrate the arrival of the first aircraft into the Cobham Conversion Centre. Voyager will provide enhanced levels of availability, reliability and comfort for its passengers. Its 4000 mile range carrying 291 passengers and freight will allow the UK to respond to world events with great speed. The air-to-air refuelling systems will provide access to an impressive 111 tonne fuel capacity and enable Voyager to refuel a large variety of platforms, from Typhoon jets to A400M transports."

About Cobham Aviation Services

Cobham Aviation Services provides specialist aviation solutions to Defence, Government and major commercial customers under long term performance based contracts. This includes modern battlespace air warfare training for the UK armed forces and NATO, operating the largest border protection civil maritime surveillance contract in the world for the Australian Government, supporting a wide range of civil and military platforms with modification and through life support, including the Sentry E3-D fleet and the Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft fleet of A330 aircraft for the UK MOD, providing air traffic control radar display software and aid calibration services to leading UK and

European airports and with partner Bristow Helicopters training all helicopter pilots for the UK's Navy, Air Force and Army through entity FBHeliservices. With a combined fleet of over 150 fixed and rotary wing aircraft Cobham Aviation Services is a trusted partner worldwide.

About Cobham Mission Equipment

Cobham Mission Equipment is a systems integration business that has been providing innovative solutions to its customers for over 75 years. The business is the market leader for air-to-air refuelling (AAR), providing fifth generation 'nose to tail' solutions from the cockpit of the donor aircraft, to the tail of the receiver platform. More than 1,000 systems have been delivered for buddy-buddy refuelling, tactical and strategic tanking for fixed wing aircraft and helicopters, with Unmanned Air vehicle refuelling development well advanced.

The 'nose to tail' AAR capability is complemented by a comprehensive 'wingtip to wingtip' offering covering a range of weapons carriage and release equipment, including missile launchers, cryogenic cooling for missile seekers, pneumatic missile fin actuation and wing store carriers, bomb ejection, defensive aids, chaff and flare systems.

Mission Equipment is also a systems solution provider in the field of Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) robot technology, providing a range of unmanned ground systems and robots serving international homeland security and military markets, with more than 700 systems delivered to 55 countries.

About Cobham

Cobham specialises in meeting the insatiable demand for data, connectivity and bandwidth in defence, security and commercial environments. Offering a technically diverse and innovative range of technologies and services, the Group protects lives and livelihoods, responding to customer needs with agility that differentiates it. The most important thing we build is trust. Employing more than 11,000 people on five

continents, the Group has customers and partners in over 100 countries, with annual revenue of some £1.9bn / US\$3 billion.

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