

Peter Collins with the Raytheon Astor Sentinel.



PETER'S PUT TO THE TEST

Q: What are the main elements of your role?

A: For test flying, it's the old adage of needing 10h of planning for 1h of flying. It's not an environment where you can just go out and fly. Normally you don't get much time in the aircraft therefore every second counts, and you make every second count with good planning and good organisation. An awful lot of the test flying need involves project management, organisation and making sure that the right people are in the right place at the right time. You've only got one shot at it and you're putting in a lot of other assets. If you don't do that it can become a disaster, and an expensive disaster at that.

Q: What makes a good test pilot?

A: You've got to have an

Peter Collins, head of flying and chief test pilot with Raytheon UK, arrived at Farnborough in style: piloting the Royal Air Force's new Raytheon Sentinel R1 Astor (airborne stand-off radar) surveillance aircraft.

inquiring mind. You've got to be a person who likes asking questions and likes getting to the bottom of problems. You also need a flexible approach, and a clear mind to everything: you can't be hung up on the aircraft you've flown before, or which country an aircraft is manufactured in.

The test pilot also needs to be able to play their part as a member of a team. You need to be able to bring your opinions back to the ground engineers and the ground designers. They always say in test flying: 'Don't bring me facts, bring me answers.' You've

got to be able to tell the designer what you think is wrong, where you think it's wrong, how you think it's wrong and what you think they can do to fix it. And you've got to be certain of that because there's a lot dependent on what you say.

Q: How do people become test pilots?

A: Most test pilots originally come from a military background. For a civilian, it's not easy to get a test pilot qualification because it's extremely expensive. It's normally a one-year course, although there are more tailored courses available

now, and there are options to do modular training.

Q: What's the best thing about the job?

A: You're able to fly an aircraft in a way that most other pilots can't. You are able to explore the airplane at the corners of the envelope, and beyond if necessary, in conjunction with the ground designers and with safety systems in place. There are some high-risk areas and you approach these in a very sensible manner and in a way that you have as much knowledge as you can.

Whereas airliners and large aircraft need to be flown in a controlled manner, as a test pilot you can do some great work with the airplane to check that things do operate as intended, and you have to be fairly brutal with the aircraft to do this.

The bad thing is that you

WORKING DAY

Peter Collins: CV

Raytheon UK head of flying and chief test pilot

- 04-: Head of Flying and chief test pilot Raytheon Systems UK. Raytheon ASTOR Project Pilot.
- 98-04: Head of Quality and head of Technical KLM UK, Stansted, UK.
- 96-98: Experimental test pilot, Dornier, Munich, Germany.
- 93-96: Experimental test pilot, Fokker, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
- 90-93: Military experimental test pilot.(VAAC Harrier). Defence Research Agency (DRA), Bedford, UK.
- 89: Test Pilot School. ETPS, Boscombe Down, UK.
- 85-88: Red Arrows (Hawk). Team Pilot and Leader. RAF Scampton, UK.
- 82-85: 4 (AC) Sqn (Harrier). Front Line Pilot. RAF Gutersloh, Germany.
- 81-82: 809 Naval Air Squadron (Sea Harrier). Front Line Pilot. HMS Illustrious. Falklands.
- 81: 63 Sqn (Hawk). Tactics and Weapons Instructor. RAF Chivenor, UK.
- 78-81: 3 (F) Sqn (Harrier). Front Line Pilot. RAF Gutersloh, Germany.
- 75-78: RAF Pilot Training (Basic, Advanced, TWU, OCU).
- 72-75: University of Southampton, BSc (Hons) Physics.
- 72: PPL (Flying Scholarship).
- 71: Glider Solo.

don't get a lot of flying. There is an awful lot of ground preparation but in your 1h of flying you'll probably do things that most pilots will never do in their lifetime.

Parc looks to Japan for expansion

Labour provider Parc Aviation has established a Japanese subsidiary and opened an office in Tokyo. The move is designed to capitalise on what it sees as a recovering Japanese economy and growing aviation opportunities in the region.

The office, which officially opened on July 1, will be headed by Padraic Toolan, recently appointed director of Client Services for Parc Aviation Japan, who took up his position in Tokyo last month.

Last week the new company signed contracts to supply staff to two Japanese airlines, ANA & JP Express (AJV) and Air Nippon. (ANK). AJV is a joint venture company set up between All Nippon Airways and Japan Post. Pilots will be based at Narita, Tokyo and operate B767 Freighter aircraft to points in Asia and the United States for an initial period of five years.

The ANK contract will involve pilots being based at Haneda Airport, Tokyo and operating B737-500 aircraft on domestic routes. This contract will run for an initial period of three-and-a-half years and both agreements will see the first group of pilots commencing training in Tokyo this month. Parc Aviation has more than 700 pilots and engineers on assignment around the globe.

More jobs for Huntsville

Huntsville may be only the fourth largest city in Alabama, US, but it is certainly punching above its weight when it comes to aerospace, as members of the Huntsville delegation (HD452) at Farnborough happily explain.

"All the heavy-hitters are in Huntsville," says Ethan Hadley, vice-president of the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce. "We've got a real critical mass for defence operations, particularly for systems integration and research and development; we're a centre of excellence for rotorcraft and missiles; and NASA has a big presence here.

"We're starting to see the same sort of interest from aircraft manufacturers and I think we'll start to see the same growth developing in this area."

Boeing, Raytheon, EADS and Sikorsky are among the aerospace companies with a major presence in the city. In all more than 17,000

members of the 170,000 workforce are engineers - one of the highest proportions of engineers anywhere in the world.

Employment for aerospace personnel in the southern city is buoyant. Huntsville-based West Wind Technologies will provide systems integration for the \$2.2 billion US Army Eurocopter contract, announced earlier this month. The city has also gained from the US military's Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) programme, to the tune of 5,000 new jobs, which add to the 32,000 existing defence jobs.

The large number of engineering jobs and the city's low cost of living mean that engineers from all over the US continue to move to Huntsville. Earlier this month, recruitment website salary.com named Huntsville the second best value town in the US. This aerospace and defence bonanza looks set to continue for the foreseeable



Ethan Hadley, vice-president of the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce.

future, with the city continuing to invest in infrastructure to attract more business. The city airport's runway has been extended at a cost of \$31 million to make it one of the longest in the southern United States and an \$87 million airport renovation programme is due to begin over the summer.

"We are always looking to showcase our airport and our community at events like Farnborough," Hadley says. "We're constantly looking for new opportunities."