

IN BRIEF

FLYING DISPLAY

US lessor ACG orders 737s

Lessor Aviation Capital Group (ACG) placed an order for 14 Boeing 737-800s yesterday at the show. California-based ACG, which is a subsidiary of Pacific LifeCorp, has an aircraft portfolio of 209 airliners leased to 89 airlines.

ACG also announced it has acquired three 737-700s and three -800s from Aeromexico that it will lease back to the Mexican carrier.

Delivery of these aircraft, originally ordered by Aeromexico, will begin later this year.

TW Metals opens office in India

Aerospace metals distributor TW Metals (Hall 4, D8) is to open a metals processing and distribution centre and sales office in Bangalore, southern India.

The new facility will process aerospace-quality bar, tube, sheet and plate metal and will be fully operational by the end of 2006. A liaison office has already been established there.

The quiet, and loud, Americans

Geoff Thomas

Test pilots are a close-knit breed – and none more so than Marty Shubert, Steve Grohsmayer and Ricardo Traven. All three are based at the US navy's air systems command station at NAS Patuxent River in Maryland.

And while Marty and Steve take turns to fly the remarkably silent – and impressive – Bell Boeing V-22 Osprey tiltrotor in Farnborough's flying display, Ricardo charges around making loads of noise in the Boeing F/A-18F Super Hornet.

Loves

It's Ricardo's third Farnborough airshow and he loves his biennial visit to sunny Hampshire.

"This year I'm flying the aircraft 'clean' which means that the show contains more high-energy manoeuvres," he says.

"Even though I've been a test pilot on the Super Hornet for eight years – and on the F-18 for close to 20 – I still enjoy doing what I do."



Two of a kind: Osprey test pilots Marty Shubert and Steve Grohsmayer

When you're watching Ricardo's display in the Super Hornet, remember that he's regularly pulling +7.5/-3G which explains the high-energy description.

The aircraft he's flying, incidentally, comes from the USN's VFA122 squadron in California and was

ferried across the Atlantic by a navy pilot – with a little help from tankers – direct to Farnborough from Jacksonville, Florida.

The Osprey, which also arrived under its own power, seems as quiet as the Hornet is loud.

This seems an anomaly

when it has two relatively large engines and looks as though it ought to make a bit more commotion.

"The reason," explains Steve Grohsmayer – who's a test pilot for the Boeing half of the joint venture, while Marty works for Bell – "is quite simple.

"Helicopters and turbo-prop aircraft make such a racket because of the tip-speed of the rotors or propellers.

"In the V-22, our huge propellers only turn at 333rpm in straight and level flight – and up to 397rpm when we're hovering so they create relatively little sound."

One question that's often asked about the Osprey is what happens if one of the engines stops burning and turning?

Loves

It turns out to be no more than a minor inconvenience – unless you're in the hover at an altitude of less than 150ft (45m).

"Depending on your all-up gross weight in hover mode," says Steve, "it's usually possible to trade your height for speed and simply fly out of the problem with – admittedly – little room for error.

"If an engine fails in straight and level flight, there's no problem whatsoever as the Osprey will fly all day on one engine."

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Richard Mann

Phone (44) 20 8910 7831 | Fax (44) 20 8910 7749
E-mail richard.mann@reedexpo.co.uk

www.aviationlatam.com
info@aviationlatam.com

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