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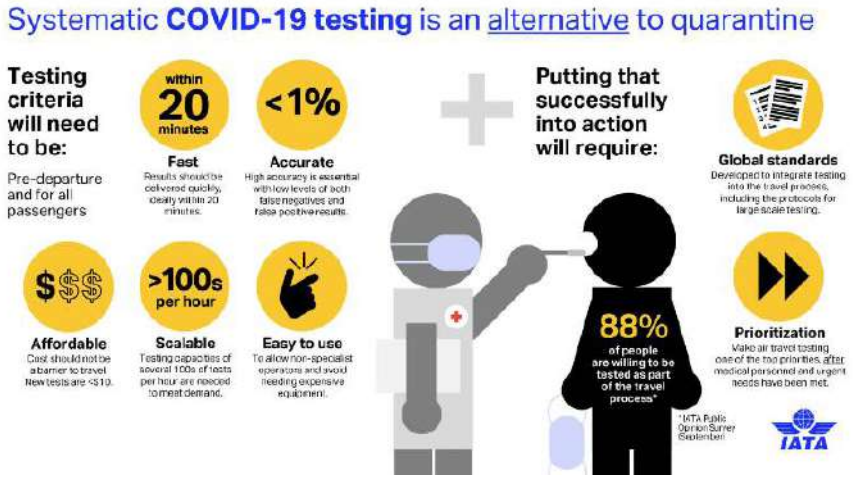
Only 44 potential cases of in-flight COVID-19 transmission in over a billion passengers in 2020 – IATA reports



In a recent report by IATA the incidents of inflight COVID-19 transmission are reported to be considerable very low. The figures speak for themselves, since the beginning of 2020, there have been 44 cases of COVID-19 reported in which transmission is thought to have been associated with a flight journey (inclusive of confirmed, probable and potential cases). Over the same period some 1.2 billion passengers have travelled.

"The risk of a passenger contracting COVID-19 while on board appears very low. With only 44 identified potential cases of flight-related transmission among 1.2 billion travellers, that's one case for every 27 million travellers. We recognize that this may be an underestimate but even if 90 of the cases were un-reported, it would be one case for every 2.7 million travellers. We think these figures are extremely reassuring. Furthermore, the vast majority of published cases occurred before the wearing of face coverings inflight became widespread," said Dr.David Powell, IATA's Medical Advisor.

New insight into why the numbers are so low has come from the joint publication by Airbus, Boeing and Embraer of separate computational fluid dynamics (CFD) research conducted by each manufacturer in their aircraft. While methodologies differed slightly, each detailed simulation confirmed that aircraft airflow systems do control the movement of particles in the cabin, limiting the spread of viruses. Data from the simulations yielded similar results:

• Aircraft airflow systems, High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters, the natural barrier of the seatback, the downward flow of air, and high rates of air exchange efficiently reduce the risk of disease transmission on board in normal times.

• The addition of mask-wearing amid pandemic concerns adds a further and significant extra layer of protection, which makes being seated in close proximity in an aircraft cabin safer than most other indoor environments.

Although there is no way to establish an exact tally of possible flight-associated cases, IATA's outreach to airlines and public health authorities combined with a thorough review of available literature has not yielded any indication that onboard transmission is in any way common or widespread.

Layered Approach of Preventive Measures

Mask-wearing on board was recommended by IATA in June and is a common requirement on most airlines since the subsequent publication and implementation of the Takeoff Guidance by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). This guidance adds multiple layers of protection on top of the airflow systems which already ensure a safe cabin environment with very low risks of inflight transmission of disease.

"ICAO's comprehensive guidance for safe air travel amid the COVID-19 crisis relies on multiple layers of protection, which involve the airports as well as the aircraft. Mask-wearing is one of the most visible. But managed queuing, contactless processing, reduced movement in the cabin, and simplified onboard services are among the multiple measures the aviation industry is taking to keep flying safe. And this is on top of the fact that airflow systems are designed to avoid the spread of disease with high air flow rates and air exchange rates, and highly effective filtration of any recycled air," said Powell.

Aircraft design characteristics add a further layer of protection contributing to the low incidence of inflight transmission. These include:

• Limited face-to-face interactions as passengers face forward and move about very little

• The effect of the seat-back acting as a physical barrier to air movement from one row to another

• The minimization of forward-aft flow of air, with a segmented flow design which is directed generally downward from ceiling to floor

• The high rate of fresh air coming into the cabin. Air is exchanged 20-30 times per hour on board most aircraft, which compares very favorably with the average office space (average 2-3 times per hour) or schools (average 10-15 times per hour).

• The use of HEPA filters which have more than 99.9% bacteria/virus removal efficiency rate ensuring that the air supply entering the cabin is not a pathway for introducing microbes.

• "There is no single silver-bullet measure that will enable us to live and travel safely in the age of COVID-19. But the combination of measures that are being put in place is reassuring travellers the world over that COVID-19 has not defeated their freedom to fly. Nothing is completely risk-free. But with just 44 published cases of potential inflight COVID-19 transmission among 1.2 billion travelers, the risk of contracting the virus on board appears to be in the same category as being struck by lightning," said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA's Director General and CEO.

• The interaction of design factors in creating a uniquely low-risk environment had been intuitively understood but not previously modelled prior to the CFD simulations by the three major manufacturers in each of their aircraft cabins. The following are highlights from the manufacturers' research:

Airbus used CFD to create a highly accurate simulation of the air in an A320 cabin, to see how droplets resulting from a cough move within the cabin airflow. The simulation calculated parameters such as air speed, direction and temperature at 50 million points in the cabin, up to 1,000 times per second.

Airbus then used the same tools to model a non-aircraft environment, with several individuals keeping six feet (1.8 meters) distance between them. The result was that potential exposure was lower when seated side by side on a plane than when staying six feet apart in an environment such as an office, classroom or grocery store.

"After multiple, highly-detailed simulations using the most accurate scientific methods available, we have concrete data which reveals the aircraft cabin offers a much safer environment than indoor public spaces," said Bruno Fargeon, Airbus Engineering and the leader of the Airbus Keep Trust in Air Travel Initiative. "The way that air circulates, is filtered and replaced on airplanes creates an absolutely unique environment in which you have just as much protection being seated side-by-side as you would standing six feet apart on the ground."

Using CFD, Boeing researchers tracked how particles from coughing and breathing move around the airplane cabin. Various scenarios were studied including the coughing passenger with and without a mask, the coughing passenger located in various seats including the middle seat, and different variations of passengers' individual overhead air vents (known as gaspers) on and off.

"This modeling determined the number of cough particles that entered the breathing space of the other passengers", said Dan Freeman, the chief engineer for Boeing's Confident Travel Initiative. "We then compared a similar scenario in other environments, such as an office conference room. Based on the airborne particle count, passengers sitting next to one another on an airplane is the same as standing more than seven feet (or two meters) apart in a typical building environment."

Using CFD, cabin air flow and droplet dispersion models validated in full-scale cabin environment testing, Embraer analyzed the cabin environment considering a coughing passenger in several different seats and air flow conditions in our different aircraft to measure these variables and their effect. The research Embraer completed shows that risk of onboard transmission is extremely low, and the actual data on in-flight transmissions that may have occurred, supports these findings.

Luis Carlos Affonso, Senior Vice-President of Engineering, Technology and Strategy, Embraer, said, "The human need to travel, to connect, and to see our loved ones has not disappeared. In fact, at times like this, we need our families and friends even more. Our message today is that because of the technology and procedures in place, you can fly safely – all the research demonstrates this. In fact, the cabin of a commercial aircraft is one of the safer spaces available anywhere during this pandemic." "The detailed computational fluid dynamics research of the aircraft manufacturers demonstrates that combining the aircraft's existing design features with mask-wearing creates a low-risk environment for COVID-19 transmission. As always, airlines, manufacturers and every entity involved in aviation will be guided by science and global best practices to keep flying safe for passengers and crew," said de Juniac.

This research effort demonstrates the cooperation and dedication to safety of all involved in air transport and provides evidence that cabin air is safe. Aviation earns its reputation on safety with each and every flight. This is not different for flying in the time of COVID-19. A recent IATA study found that 86% of recent travellers felt that the industry's COVID-19 measures were keeping them safe and were well-implemented.

Emirates introduces 16 self-service bag drop machines and 8 self-service kiosks at Dubai Airport

In response to the WHO guidelines and in an effort of re-starting aviation and restoring passenger confidence in air travel, Emirates has introduced self check-in and bag drop kiosks for a more seamless airport experience at Terminal 3, Dubai International Airport. The service is now available to customers travelling to all destinations except to the US, Canada, China, India and Hong Kong due to additional requirements from these destinations. There are a total of 16 new self-service bag drop machines and 8 self-service kiosks which complement the desks manned by Emirates check-in agents to reduce waiting time for customers during peak periods and improve the customer experience in Dubai.

The kiosks allow customers to check-in, receive their boarding pass, choose seats on board, and drop off their bags. While Emirates staff will be on hand for any assistance required, the facilities are fully self- service, allowing customers to breeze through the airport and proceed directly to immigration. The facilities are cleaned and disinfected regularly and hand sanitizers are also available for customers to use.

The solution was developed in house at Emirates in collaboration with Dubai Aviation Engineering Projects and Dubai Airports. The self check-in kiosks will be continually upgraded to offer new features in the future including going touchless, and allowing customers to make re-bookings on their own.

Looking after passengers at every step with flydubai global COVID-19 cover

Restoring passenger confidence in air travel is the first and foremost aim before all the aerospace industries to re-start aviation.In order to achieve this goal many airlines are offering attractive discounts and flights to exotic destinations to attract tourists. Apart from this, many airlines have offered COVID-19 insurance cover to passengers for a limited period. Etihad decided on giving the global wellness cover to all passengers under the Etihad Wellness initiative. Next in line is flydubai who announced last month that passengers booking with flydubai for travel between 01 September 2020 and 30 November 2020 will automatically receive free global cover for COVID-19. The insurance will cover health expenses and quarantine costs apart from playing a huge role in restoring passenger confidence in air travel and giving them the much-needed peace of mind.

Hamad Obaidalla, Chief Commercial Officer at flydubai said, "The safety of our passengers and crew remains our highest priority. The new COVID-19 cover we are offering to our passengers will encourage more people to travel with ease of mind knowing that they will be looked after at every step of their journey. We see the demand for travel starting to increase as more countries gradually lift restrictions on international travel. Safeguarding the passenger journey with added precautions and enhanced procedures will help to stimulate the flow of trade and tourism globally."

The new service covers passengers' health expenses and quarantine costs if diagnosed with COVID-19 during their trip and is valid for 31 days from the time they take their first flight on their itinerary. The service enables passengers to benefit from coverage for their medical expenses up to EUR 150,000 and quarantine costs up to EUR 100 per day for 14 days.

flydubai COVID-19 Cover Assistance claims are managed by NEXtCARE Claims Management LLC (NEXtCARE), who provide around the clock assistance for passengers.

Boeing to reposition 787 production line to adjust market downturn

In order to preserve liquidity and reposition certain lines of business in the current global environment Boeing has decided to consolidate production of 787 jets at its North Charleston facility in South Carolina

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, many aerospace industries have taken some tough calls to sustain their businesses. Another such decision comes from Boeing. In order to preserve liquidity and reposition certain lines of business in the current global environment Boeing has decided to consolidate production of 787 jets at its North Charleston facility in South Carolina.

While Boeing's versatile 787 family has outperformed other widebody airplanes during the challenging market downturn, its production system has been adjusted to accommodate the current difficult market environment while positioning the 787 family to ramp up production as air travel increases.

"The Boeing 787 is tremendously successful today thanks to our great teammates in Everett. They helped give birth to an airplane that changed how airlines and passengers want to fly. As our customers manage through the unprecedented global pandemic, to ensure the long-term success of the 787 program, we are consolidating 787 production in South Carolina," said Stan Deal, president and chief executive officer of Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

The company began assembling 787-8 and 787-9 airplanes at its Everett site in 2007, and brought the North Charleston facility on line as a second final assembly line in 2010. However, only the North Charleston site is set up to build the larger 787-10 model. Production of the smaller 787 models will continue in Everett until the program transitions to the previously-announced production rate of six airplanes a month in 2021.

In July, Boeing announced an in-depth study into the feasibility of producing 787s at a single location. The review examined the impacts and benefits to Boeing customers, suppliers, employees and the overall health of the production system. The 787 study is part of an enterprise review underway to reassess all aspects of Boeing's facility footprint, organizational structure, portfolio and investment mix, and supply chain health and stability.

This analysis confirmed the feasibility and efficiency gains created by consolidation, which enables the company to accelerate improvements and target investments to better support customers.

"We recognize that production decisions can impact our teammates, industry and our community partners," said Deal. "We extensively evaluated every aspect of the program and engaged with our stakeholders on how we can best partner moving forward. These efforts will further refine 787 production and enhance the airplane's value proposition.

Boeing said it is assessing potential impacts to employment in Everett and North Charleston and will communicate any changes directly to its employees.

FL Technics signs continuous airworthiness management contract with Wizz Air Abu Dhabi

FL Technics have signed a long-term contract to support the international low-cost carrier Wizz Air Abu Dhabi with complete Continuing Airworthiness Management (CAM) services. FL Technics is a part of Avia Solutions Group and a global provider of integrated aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul services.

"FL Technics is extremely glad to become a trusted partner of Wizz Abu Dhabi with such sensitive and important function as continuing airworthiness management. We are excited to share our solid experience in CAM field and strongly believe that this cooperation will positively support the successful development and growth of new Wizz Air subsidiaries, such as Wizz Abu Dhabi. Moreover, we are ready and passionate to extend our cooperation within CAM field in other AOCs of Wizz Air", said Liudas Jurkonis, the Head of Engineering, Design and Technical Trainings of FL Technics.

"Wizz Air is very dynamic and progressive organisation, we expand and move fast. Therefore, we need a trustful and flexible partner to meet not only our high standards for continuous support, but also to meet our needs in this demanding and aggressive market. Being professional in your field is a necessity of any business, and that is why we have chosen to work with FL Technics to start our new subsidiary – Wizz Air Abu Dhabi," said Ljubomir Jesic, Senior Technical Services Manager of Wizz Air Abu Dhabi.

FL Technics will perform continuous airworthiness management for Airbus A320 NEO and CEO family aircraft, and will provide full CAM services in accordance with the requirements of the General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) ensuring a proper control in AMOS system. The scope of work is not limited to full CAM services. It will also cover other engineering services, which Wizz Air requires on a regular and ad hoc basis.

Payload fairing manufacture for Atlas V shifts to RUAG America

The Antonov An-124, one of the largest transport aircraft in the world took off from Emmen for the last time for the spaceport in Florida. In its hold a payload fairing from RUAG Space, manufactured for the American launch vehicle Atlas V. These will be produced in the USA in future. The Emmen site will remain the competence centre for European launchers. Composite structures for the American launchers Atlas V and the new Vulcan Centaur have been produced at RUAG's American site in Decatur, Alabama, since 2017. The Emmen production site will remain the competence center for the European Ariane and VEGA launchers.

Holger Wentscher, Senior Vice President Product Group Launchers at RUAG Space said, "United Launch Alliance (ULA) and RUAG Space have been working together successfully in the Atlas program for more than a decade. By setting up the site in Decatur, we were able to significantly strengthen our strategic partnership with ULA. Local production not only creates customer proximity. At the same time, we are able to further expand our presence in the USA".

The payload fairings in composite technology are manufactured there in a 5000 m production hall in a modern, partially automated process. Thanks to an innovative process, the carbon fiber structures required for the payload fairings can be manufactured without the use of an autoclave. In addition to the Atlas launchers all Ariane rockets launched to date have been flying with payload fairings from RUAG Space since 1979.

"For us, not only the arrival of the aircraft but also the loading of the sensitive cargo was always a special experience," said Jérôme Bonhomme, Project Manager Atlas.

The Antonov An-124 of the Russian airline Volga-Dnepr has a take-off mass of over 400 tons and a wingspan of 73.30 meters and can carry a cargo of up to 120 tons. The payload fairing of the American launch vehicle Atlas V isn't quite so heavy, but due to its dimensions the cargo hold of the Antonov An-124 is practically filled. Loading the 20m high structure required time-consuming millimeter work.

"We need almost the entire loading area to transport our payload fairing. This meant that we had to pay meticulous attention to the space available so that the precious cargo was not damaged. In addition to the right equipment, this required a great deal of skill and sensitivity," continued Jérôme Bonhomme.

The payload fairing makes up about one third of the total length of a launch vehicle. The fairing is located on the upper part of the rocket and consists of two half-shells made of carbon fiber composites that split in space. It protects the satellites before launch from high temperatures, solar radiation, dust, humidity or rain at the launch site. During the first few minutes of flight, the payload fairing must reliably protect the satellites encapsulated under it from noise, the enormous heat and mechanical loads.

Aerostar's 3-bay state-of-art MRO hangar at IAS open for customers

Aerostar recently announced the opening of its brand new state-of-art MRO hangar at the Iasi International Airport (IAS) in northeast Romania. The 3-bay MRO hangar has an area of 8400 sq.m and provides workplace for over 100 engineers and technicians. It has three doors for easy aircraft movement and back shops attached to the hangar along with a small machine shop. Airbus A320neo (LEAP-1A) aircraft of Pegasus Airlines was the first aircraft in the new Hangar.

This new facility is 130km north of Aerostar's existing business operations at Bacau where the two existing dedicated hangars provide seven aircraft bays. It is a part of AEROSTAR's EASA Part-145 maintenance base and is a new work location for the company. During 2019 Aerostar recorded a number of Boeing 737 and Airbus A320 heavy checks with more than 100 aircraft passing through its Bacau facility for 'C' and 'D' checks.

During August 2020, the investment in the new hangar was completed as well as receipt of the necessary approvals from the airworthiness authorities for the management and execution of commercial aviation MRO activities for Airbus 320 and Boeing 737 aircraft families.

AEROSTAR has also increased its capabilities and experience for the installation of STC modifications, including the Airconnect Global Satellite Connectivity System from Global Eagle and ACARS Datalink Systems Installations.

In parallel with the hangar development, AEROSTAR is continuing to provide training courses to licence the personnel under Part-145 and to complete the Part-66 authorisations that will allow them to certify the release to service of an aircraft after maintenance, both for Bacau and the new centre in Iasi.

'HAECO' – Next-gen MRO of choice for landing gear overhaul

HAECO Landing Gear Services recently completed the world's first Boeing 787 Dreamliner landing gear overhaul. The gears have been released by HAECO Landing Gear Services under the authority of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and Japan Civil Aviation Bureau (JCAB).

They are the first MRO to be approved with full overhaul capabilities for Boeing's 747-8 landing gears. As a specialist in landing gear overhaul, HAECO Landing Gear Services' capabilities cover the full series of Boeing 737, 747, 757, 767, 777, 787 and Embraer E190/E195. This reinforces the company's presence as the MRO of choice for the next generation of commercial landing gears in a highly competitive environment

Jet Aviation achieved optimum benchmark of quieter and lighter cabin by refurbishing the interiors of ACJ319neo

Jet Aviation Completions Centre in Basel completely refurbished, remodelled and redelivered the interiors of quietest VVIP cabin, the ACJ319neo aircraft as per customer specifications. The in-house Design Studio worked closely with Engineering and Production to realize the customer's vision in exquisite detail. The customer wanted to maximise light in the cabin, through strategic placement of decorative mirrored panels throughout the interior. Each mirror was to be etched with an intricate pattern reflected in the carpet and mouldings to add subtle layers of detail to the calm and refined aesthetic.

Apart from this the customer wanted a custom embroidered art panel depicting an Oriental scene above the bed in the master bedroom, with complementary artworks hanging throughout the cabin and furnishings in cream and light beige complemented with gold, mother of pearl, and Calcatta and Onyx marble detail. Jet Aviation Design Studio worked in collaboration with the customer's own interior designer to achieve a truly VVIP level of elegance and attention to detail.

Jeremie Caillet, Vice President Completions said, "The cabin is extremely comfortable, with a remarkably quiet interior, all at reduced weight. This was made possible by Jet Aviation's commitment to constant improvement in production and process. Our departments have been working together to rethink industry norms, and apply new methodologies to create the next generation of VVIP cabins that are not only beautifully designed and crafted, but are lighter and quieter, thus reducing fuel consumption while still providing passengers exceptional levels of comfort."

"As the market continues to demand quieter and lighter cabins, we are delighted to provide a benchmark for achieving the optimum blend of both, with no compromise on customer comfort or aesthetics," adds Matthew Woollaston, VP Completions Sales. "This ACJ319neo is a fine testament to our ability to meet these demands, while retaining the highest levels of quality and comfort that Jet Aviation is known for."

Jet Aviation's Completions Centre in Basel has over 40 years of experience crafting beautifully customized private aircraft interiors. The centre has completed over 200 aircraft, including 23 Airbus since 2000.

APOC focussed on securing youngest airframes possible as air traffic resumes

APOC Aviation recently closed a deal with a leading lessor Aircastle for a 2008 vintage A319 (MSN 3450) that was returned from lease by Volaris in July. This aircraft is currently undergoing its part-out in Marana in Arizona where the previous two APOC teardowns were carried out. The first serviceable parts, including landing gear will most likely be shipped back to APOC's Rotterdam facility in the last quarter of this year.

Jasper van den Boogaard, VP Airframe Acquisition & Trading at APOC Aviation said, "The Company is focused on securing the youngest airframes possible. As operators reflect on their capacity and right-size their fleets in the COVID-19 environment we anticipate that more deals will be on the table this Autumn. Our policy is to pursue younger equipment that will be more desirable for the in-service fleet, MRO and AOG requirements. We see this as the future and anticipate that the value of older narrow body parts will decline significantly."

APOC has a very straight forward policy – access younger aircraft components that will align with commercial operators fleet requirements as air traffic resumes. The teardown of A319 perfectly complements their recent purchases of other A320 airframe families. Access to flexible and immediate funding to take advantage of this prime asset purchase was swiftly secured through private placement.

"APOC Aviation was quick to seize this opportunity and already have closed several Airbus airframe deals this year. We want a balanced stock to support our customers. I'm expecting our next aircraft will be a B737NG. Airlines and lessors seeking swift transactions to stabilise their balance sheets are always welcome to reach out to us," added Van den Boogaard.

Actively targeting further acquisitions requires access to capital and APOC Aviation is one of the lucky few bidders with accessible liquidity post-COVID, and a business model firmly geared to growth.

All-Airbus Middle East Airlines welcomes their third A320neo

The all-Airbus Middle East Airlines (MEA) recently took delivery of third Airbus' A320neo with MSN10,000 taking their total fleet count to 18. MEA received its first A321neo aircraft earlier in 2020 and will be taking another six A321neos over the coming months. The handover of the aircraft took place in Toulouse in the presence of Mohamad El-Hout, Chairman and Director General of MEA.

"We are honoured to receive the state of the art A321neo with its distinctive serial number 10,000 coinciding with the 75th anniversary of Middle East Airlines and specially after receiving MSN5,000 back in 2012. Since we first acquired an A320 Family aircraft in 2003, we have not only benefited from the outstanding operational efficiency of the aircraft but were also the first airline to introduce the wide-body cabin product on a single-aisle aircraft which has become a trend in the airline industry afterwards," said MEA Chairman and Director General, Mohamad El Hout. "Unfortunately, due to the current situation in Lebanon, this time we will not be able to celebrate the delivery of the MSN10,000 in Beirut, as we did with the MSN5,000, but I am sure that in these challenging circumstances, it is a ray of light, hope and motivation to surpass our nation's difficulties."

"Airbus is proud to continue building its long-standing partnership with Middle East Airlines which already operates one of the most modern Airbus fleets in the world. As an all Airbus operator, MEA benefits from the Airbus' unique fleet commonality between aircraft families and is now adding the third highly fuel-efficient A321neo to step up the game. I admire the agility and the resilience of this company in this complex environment," said Christian Scherer, Airbus Chief Commercial Officer. "Delivering MSN10,000 is a milestone that demonstrates the success of the A320 Family and we thank our customers globally for their confidence in our products."

The airline's A321neo is powered by Pratt & Whitney's PurePower PW1100G-JM geared turbofan engines and is configured in a comfortable two-class layout with 28 seats in Business and 132 seats in Economy Class. It is also equipped with the latest generation in-flight entertainment system and high-speed connectivity. Incorporating the latest engines, aerodynamic advances, and cabin innovations, the A321neo offers a reduction in fuel consumption of 20 per cent as well as a 50 per cent noise reduction.

Air Canada expands their relation with Avolon and begins a new inning with Jackson Square Aviation

Air Canada recently completed sale and leaseback transactions for three Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft with Jackson Square Aviation and six Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft with Avolon Aerospace Leasing Limited for total proceeds of USD 365 million and long-term lease commitments of USD 345 million. The nine aircraft were delivered to Air Canada over the past three years.

"Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, Air Canada has accessed financial markets numerous times and has successfully raised almost USD 6.0 billion in liquidity, on reasonable terms and conditions, including with this transaction, as it continues to maintain liquidity levels to mitigate the challenges and uncertainty ahead. We are very pleased to be extending our strong relationship with Avolon and beginning a new relationship with Jackson Square Aviation," said Michael Rousseau, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer of Air Canada.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in the first quarter of 2020, Air Canada has raised almost USD 6.0 billion in liquidity. Additionally, it recently completed two long term financings to replace USD 1.4 billion in short-term debt coming due within the next nine months.

Air Canada is utilizing the net proceeds from these transactions to supplement its working capital and for other general corporate purposes. The net proceeds from the transactions will serve to increase Air Canada's cash position, thereby allowing for additional flexibility in the implementation of mitigation and recovery measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Royal Thai Air Force awards USD 162 million contract to Textron for pilot and AME training on Beechcraft T-6C

Royal Thai Air Force has awarded a USD 162 million contract to the Textron Aviation Defence for an Integrated Training System in support of operations at the Royal Thai Air Force Flying Training School at Kamphaeng Saen air base. The contract is for 12 Beechcraft T-6C Texan II advanced military training aircraft, ground-based training systems for pilots and maintenance professionals, a mission planning and debrief system, spare parts and ground support equipment. The work in support of this contract will take place at the Textron's Wichita, Kansas facilities.

"The Royal Thai Air Force operates one of the most advanced air forces in Asia Pacific and is a key US security ally," said Thomas Webster, regional director of Textron Aviation Defence Asia Pacific Sales. "Their acquisition of the Beechcraft T-6C Texan II Integrated Training System empowers their cadre of student pilots with a technological advantage throughout their flight training and prepares them for a successful transition to advanced fighter and attack aircraft."

The Beechcraft T-6 Texan II acquisition is in accordance with the 10-year Royal Thai Air Force Purchase and Development (P&D) Plan published in the RTAF White Paper 2020. The plan focuses on the modernization of key capabilities and promoting the development of the Thai defence industry.

"This program is a leap towards the new perspective of the Thai government to support the local defence industry, not only to procure a new trainer," said ACM Maanat Wongwat, Commander in Chief, The Royal Thai Air Force. "This program seeks the involvement between diverse partners, primarily between foreign and Thai local companies, which has been driven by the government's current strategy "S-Curve 11."

Textron Aviation Defence training of Royal Thai Air Force pilots and maintenance professionals is set to begin in Wichita in 2022 while the 12 Beechcraft T-6C Texan II aircraft christened the T-6TH in Thailand are expected to join the Royal Thai fleet between late 2022 and early 2023. Textron Aviation Defence plans to ferry two of the 12 aircraft to Thailand, crating and transporting the remaining 10 aircraft to Kamphaeng Saen air base.

"We're proud to equip the Royal Thai Air Force with the world's most proven off-the-shelf training capability in the industry," noted Brett Pierson, vice president of Textron Aviation Defence Strategy & Sales. "The Royal Thai Air Force will now have an affordable, low-risk next-generation military trainer designed for all levels of instruction, enabling a steady tempo of flight students transitioning from Pilot-In-Training to Pilot-In-Command. I know the legendary T-6 will support the Royal Thai Air Force with long-term reliability, cost-effective operations and a fully integrated array of simulators, computer-based academics and sustainable logistics."

To date, the Beechcraft T-6 Texan II has logged more than 4.1 million flight hours across a global fleet of nearly 1,000 aircraft.

Northrop to provide prototype ground stations for US Army's Tactical Intelligence program

US Army's Tactical Exploitation of National Capabilities (TENCAP) and Defence Innovation Unit has selected Northrop Grumman Corporation to develop two prototype ground stations for the Tactical Intelligence Targeting Access Node (TITAN) system.

The TITAN system will be a scalable and expeditionary intelligence ground station that will leverage space, high altitude, aerial and terrestrial layer sensors to provide targetable data that allows commanders at all echelons to quickly assess threats to their forces. In this prototype effort, Northrop Grumman's deployable and semi-autonomous ground station prototypes will demonstrate the value of space assets in improving battlefield awareness and tactical intelligence in Anti-Access/ Area Denial (A2AD) environments.

The system will also help connect the joint force by providing near real-time intelligence using artificial intelligence and machine learning techniques to rapidly deliver fused data from multi-domain sensors to weapon platforms, such as artillery, jammers, and airborne systems.

"Our ground station prototypes will integrate existing software and hardware capabilities to showcase a unique ability to provide access to multi-domain actionable intelligence from commercial and military space systems," said Troy Brashear, vice president, integrated national systems, Northrop Grumman. "As a proven provider of multi-domain intelligence capabilities, we give the warfighter the ability to complete critical missions in far-reaching and highly-contested areas in a safe and deployable environment."

By leveraging commercial and military space assets, the system will facilitate deep-sensing, reduce sensor-to-shooter (S2S) timelines, and maximize the effectiveness of Long Range Precision Fires (LRPF).

A separate TITAN acquisition will provide mobile ground stations that link to terrestrial, high-altitude and airborne sensors to provide targeting data to the Army. Northrop Grumman teams recently demonstrated a software architecture to the Army that is capable of fusing multi-domain sensor data and reducing the sensor-to-shooter timelines. This common software architecture is the basis of the Northrop Grumman space-to-ground TITAN prototype system, potentially enhancing the integration of space-based data systems with the mobile ground stations in later phases of the TITAN program.
The prototype phases are expected to support multiple demonstration exercises in 2022 and 2023.

Ted van Zundert appointed as head of aircraft remarketing at SGI Aviation Services

In a recent announcement by SGI Aviation Services, Ted van Zundert is appointed as the head of new aircraft remarketing and sourcing capabilities in support of the company's growing global base of aviation customers. He will be based in SGI's new Dublin office to lead efforts to expand the firm's comprehensive support for aviation clients and projects with the broad range of industry-leading services.

In response to the appointment, SGI Group CEO Paolo Lironi said, "Mr. van Zundert's appointment is part of the company's continued strategic push to strengthen its worldwide network and enhance services to support the expanding customer base as the airlines and lessors are navigating their paths through the sector's ensuing recovery. Mr. van Zundert has a deep background in commercial aviation, having managed more than ten new aircraft type introductions for various airlines, including Maleth Aero, Cityjet, and Denim Air. With the addition of Ted's deep knowledge and extensive industry relationships, our remarketing team's capabilities will be significantly enhanced to deliver an even broader range of targeted support to meet our clients' fleet remarketing needs."

SGI Aviation's remarketing team boasts extensive experience in serving the fleets of all sizes, covering a wide range of turboprop, regional, as well as narrowbody and widebody aircraft. The team also has broad expertise in the private jet sector, as well as the aircraft interiors and modification markets.

Ted van Zundert, SGI Aviation Aircraft Remarketing and Sourcing Manager, commented on his assumed new role, "I appreciate the confidence the Board and the Management Team have placed in me with my appointment in these challenging times. I look forward to boosting the portfolio of SGI Aviation's capabilities and supporting its continued profitability."

SGI Aviation's decision to open an office in Dublin was "driven by our customers' requirement to have a local point of contact and all major lessors having their presence in Dublin. SGI Aviation Services is an independent advisor to the aviation industry, providing technical consulting and advisory services in the areas of aircraft and engine asset management.

Asier Elorduy joins Avioparts as Business Development Manager Europe and LATAM

Asier Elorduy has stepped down as the Group Sales Director at AJW Group to join as the Business Development Manager Europe & LATAM at Avioparts. In his new role, Asier will be responsible for managing and supporting clients as well as bringing in new companies to experience the benefits and advantages of working with Avioparts.

Avioparts CEO David Fojón said, "We are delighted to welcome Asier into the Avioparts team, and we feel his personality and enthusiasm will add strength in depth to our team and service to our clients."

Asier brings with him sixteen years of experience in the Aviation industry. As the Group Sales Director at AJW Group he was responsible for covering all the AJW Group business lines and capabilities on Key Strategic Accounts.

Mr. S Anbuvelan promoted as the CEO of HAL, Helicopter complex

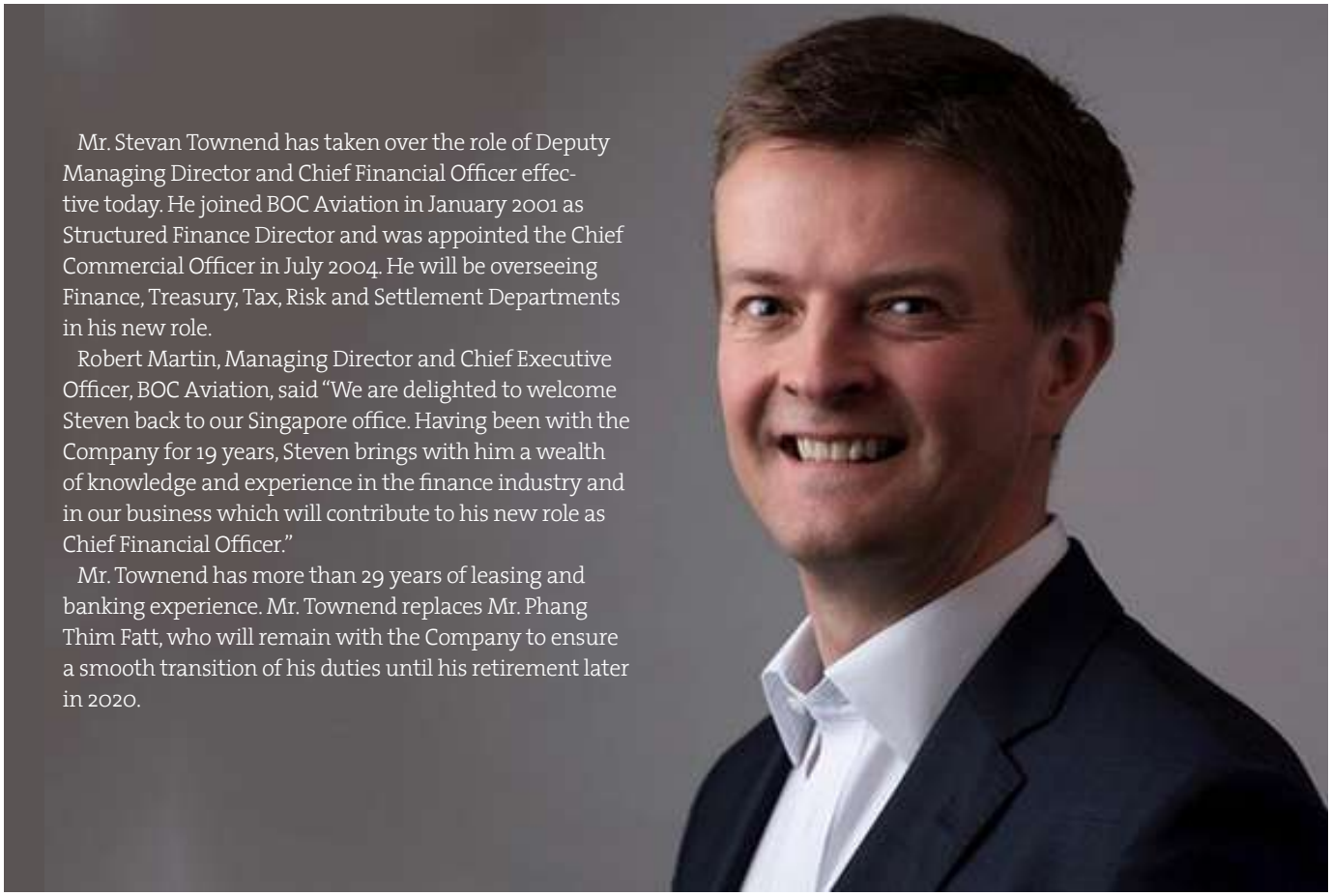
Mr.S. Anbuvelan, with over three decades of experience in Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, India is promoted to the post of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Helicopter complex. Prior to this appointment he was the Executive Director of Helicopter Division.

Mr.Anbuvelan did his graduation in mechanical engineering from Alagappa Chettiar College of Engineering, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu and then Post Graduation, M Tech in Aircraft Production Engineering from IIT Madras. Later he also did Post Graduate Diploma in Business Management from XIME, Bengaluru. He joined HAL as a management trainee (technical) in 1986 and has experience of 34 years in various key positions.

"My focus will be to ensure quality products & services and timely delivery from Helicopter Complex", said Mr Anbuvelan after taking the charge.

Some of the highlights of his career so far include productionising ALH's integrated transmission assembly, ramping up production of ALH gear boxes, reduction of snags during equipping of ALH, training & development of employees, quality improvements in ROH of Cheetah & Chetak helicopters at Barrackpore, streamlining of ALH production and implementation of latest technologies in the field of manufacturing & assembly of helicopter products.

BOC Aviation promotes Mr. Stevan Townend as CFO



Mr. Stevan Townend has taken over the role of Deputy Managing Director and Chief Financial Officer effective today. He joined BOC Aviation in January 2001 as Structured Finance Director and was appointed the Chief Commercial Officer in July 2004. He will be overseeing Finance, Treasury, Tax, Risk and Settlement Departments in his new role.

Robert Martin, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, BOC Aviation, said "We are delighted to welcome Steven back to our Singapore office. Having been with the Company for 19 years, Steven brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience in the finance industry and in our business which will contribute to his new role as Chief Financial Officer."

Mr. Townend has more than 29 years of leasing and banking experience. Mr. Townend replaces Mr. Phang Thim Fatt, who will remain with the Company to ensure a smooth transition of his duties until his retirement later in 2020.

MRO BUSINESS TODAY

International CALENDAR

2021

16-18 FEB

Saudi International Airshow

Thumamah Airport, Riyadh,
Saudi Arabia

22-24 FEB

The MEBAA Show

DWC, Dubai Airshow Site, UAE

22-23 JUN

Aviation Festival Asia 2020

Suntec Convention Centre,
Singapore

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