Photo courtesy Adam Aircraft

Adam 500

Adam Aircraft

The unique centre-line thrust, high tail twin engine Adam 500 has received its Type Inspection Authorisation from the FAA following Adam Aircraft demonstrating that the A500 pressurised, piston engine machine has passed the structural, system and company flight testing required for such an issue.

The aircraft now moves forward in the certification process as FAA pilots are now permitted to evaluate the aircraft for their flight test review for final Type Certification.

TIA is issued when the examination of technical data required for type certification is complete and demonstrates the aircraft has, or will, meet pertinent regulations for issuance of the Type Certificate. The FAA considers TIA as the most important milestone in the type certification process. With very few historical exceptions, aircraft that achieve the TIA milestone will progress to Type Certification.

Rick Adam, CEO of Adam Aircraft. "This is a major achievement. We expect Type Certification in the (US) Autumn and we look forward to delivering aircraft to customers this year"

The certification process required Adam Aircraft to build and fly three A500 aircraft, with A500 s/n003 conforming to FAA requirements. Flying over 1,000 hours of flight test on the three aircraft fleet, Adam's say that the A500 has proven itself to be extremely capable. It is the fastest piston twin on the market, offering a turboprop size cabin, and a state-of-the-art Avidyne EFIS panel.

The A500 will be the first pressurised piston twin to achieve Type Certification in almost 30 years. Adam's believe that for many customers, the light unpressurised twins available today do not deliver enough performance over their single engine counterparts, while the turbines are outside of a reasonable acquisition price and operating cost. Adam hopes that their model A500 will prove to be the perfect fit for an operator who wants a high performance aircraft, at an attractive price.

Adams claim a sales backlog of almost two years and 65 aircraft and so it is shifting its A500 focus to manufacturing and customer support. The company now has approximately 300 employees working in more than 100,000 square feet of facilities in Colorado. Several A500 aircraft are currently being built for customer delivery this year.

Meanwhile progress in the development of their pure jet model 700 continues with announcement that Williams International has received FAA Type Certification for the FJ33-4A-15 turbofan engine, which will be used to power the A700 AdamJet. The AdamJet is the first flying aircraft in the personal jet market to have a certified powerplant.

Gregg Williams, President of Williams International, announced that the formal Type Certificate for the 1568 pound thrust FJ33-4A-15 Turbo of an Engine was received from the FAA on September 10, 2004. "We couldn't be more pleased with the results of our development and certification program," said Gregg Williams. "We achieved all performance goals with large efficiency and temperature margins, and all certification testing went extremely well. We believe we also achieved an industry first, in that, other than software modifications, we did not have to make any configuration changes to the engine from the beginning of the program. This validated our decision to make the very first engine from full-scale production tooling. In addition, all certification and durability testing was conducted at speeds and thrust levels well above the initial certification levels, and we expect the engine to have a trouble-free entry into service."

Gulf Air chief in Australia

James Hogan the Australian born President & CEO of Gulf Air was in town rallying his troops, talking with the travel industry and giving a pretty straightforward assessment of the strengths and weakness of the international aviation business to the aviation press.

Buoyed by his success in slashing Gulf Air's perennial loss situation and by the news that Gulf Air had barely a spare seat to sell out of Australia after late November he spoke with some confidence that Gulf Air would return to its previous position as the pre-eminent carrier for the region.

If you can't do it once a day then don't do it all.

Hogan's view is that if you are going to serve a key location then it must be a daily service. His view is that if the port is worth servicing then do it full on and not a few days a week.

It was hard to tell who were most surprised to see the theory work in practice, the local travel industry or the Gulf executives, as the end of year holiday bookings are being realised in full Gulf Air Airbus 340s' out of Australia.

Hogan in describing the progress towards resurrecting the oldest name in Middle East aviation had no illusions over the task ahead.

Past problems - the first Gulf war, SARs were handled only to be replaced by new problems; surging fuel price rises and the highly publicised regional armed conflict. Hogan observed that regional conflicts were in reality hundreds or thousands of kilometres away from most of Gulf's important ports but they are interpreted by many potential passengers in international markets as being around the corner from Gulf Air's head office.

In addition, isolated events were depicted as daily occurrences everywhere in the region. This local disadvantage is not offset by a local advantage of cheaper fuel. To his chagrin he reported that he buys Gulf Air's cheapest fuel at Heathrow, not Bahrain.

Mr Hogan said that the convenient connections in Bahrain to a range of European, Middle East and African destinations also play a role in the carrier's growing popularity. The arrangements with Olympic Airways gave Gulf Air access to the Olympic European network. The Athens connection opened up the quickest and easiest access to the Southern European tourist destinations such as the Greek islands.

Hogan says Gulf Air can only benefit from the steady promotion of areas of high enjoyment or historical value in Arabia and elsewhere on the Gulf network. They are currently regarded in Australia as remote but are being "discovered" by Europeans in increasing numbers.

Decisions to update the First and Business class cabins had gone forward. A plan to previously reported in "Aviation News" to increase ports and frequencies in the immediate region of Bahrain by buying Regional Jets had been deferred, however.

Now, he mused, Gulf Air has money in the bank, the finance institutions want to lend him more for any amount of expansion or single projects. He thought what the airline was doing was producing results and would keep the Gulf "steady as she goes".

Hawker Pacific to enhance engine and component capabilities

Hawker Pacific, has announced that it is to streamline its Engine and Component Services by concentrating its engine maintenance operations, including the respected 'Blue Seal' product, at Jandakot in Western Australia and Bankstown in New South Wales.

The initiative gives the company a strong presence on both the East and West Coasts of Australia for its engine maintenance operations. In addition, it allows the company's Archerfield facility in Brisbane to be expanded to concentrate and build on its existing specialist component repair and maintenance operations, as well as its growing parts manufacturing activities.

Hawker Pacific Vice President MRO Australia, John King, said the move is part of the company's broader strategy to enhance the growth of its business units while at the same time improving customer service and support levels across the company.

"We have been involved in an on-going process of developing centres throughout Australia and the region and this has entailed concentrating our resources where we believe they are most needed, eliminating costly and unproductive duplication and overlap," he said.

"There was an element of duplication in what was being done in our Bankstown and Archerfield facilities and it makes good sense to allow those centres to play to their strengths".

The Bankstown and Jandakot facilities will concentrate on engine maintenance, including 'Blue Seal' production, while Archerfield will become increasingly dedicated to component repair and parts manufacture.

"This move will also allow us to better address demand for these services through our New Zealand subsidiary and in Asia where 'Blue Seal' engines are being embraced as a unique package" Mr King added.

Archerfield will continue to provide support services to the company's engine overhaul facilities through its considerable machining, process and production capabilities. It will also expand its capabilities in component manufacture and repair including wheels, brakes, undercarriages, flexible hoses, oil coolers and machining – an area in which there is strong and growing demand.