

NAVY OVERSIGHT of OMEGA AIR

From the beginning of the commercial aerial refuelling program, the US Navy has had constant interaction/oversight of Omega. Below I have listed some of the areas where this interaction/oversight occurs.

Engineering

1. Omega signed a contract with the Navy for oversight and certification of the Omega Tanker Boeing 707 (N707AR) in 1996.
2. Three Navair engineers were assigned to the programme and travelled to Mojave, CA. to monitor the modification and FAA certification process.
3. Navair required that an FAA STC (Supplemental Type Certificate) be issued for the MOD prior to Navy certification.
4. On the issuing of the FAA STC for N707AR in April 2000, testing and evaluation commenced at the Navair Test Facility at NAS Patuxent River, MD.
5. The testing evaluation was conducted by Navair Test engineers over a fourteen month period. Navair issued a fleet flight clearance on Dec 2000 for F/A18 A-D models to refuel behind Omega's now qualified tanker. The actual testing was conducted under Navy Test Plan dated Jun 2000. The test results are available in Navy Test Results Document no. NAWCADPAX/RTR-200/206. Subsequently a flight clearance was issued by Navair for all fleet aircraft except V-22.
6. In 2008 further Navair test flying was conducted for product improvement and to explore options for refuelling the V-22. This process is still incomplete due availability of V-22 test assets and is pending.
7. In 2008, Omega suffered some hose losses which were reported to Navair in accordance with our reporting procedure. Several Navy assets using the same Sargent Fletcher hose reels had similar failures. On investigation by Navair and the OEM we accomplished modifications to the gearbox and an SB was also issued to correct the problem.

Procedures

8. Omega and the US Navy approved OARS Refueling procedures and submitted the procedures for inclusion in Allied Tactical Publication 56B (ATP56B). This is the approved refuelling procedures document for Allied Nations, NATO, USAF, US Navy, USMC and US Army. This document is constantly reviewed and updated.

9. Omega has two members on the ARSAG panel which also includes US Navy personnel. The Aerial Refuelling Service Advisory Group is a DOD approved organization for reviewing Air to Air Refuelling procedures and determining change, standardisation of equipment and operations. Omega and US Navy are represented on the ARSAG panels which meet regularly during the year and have an annual review. Omega and USN implement change as applicable.
10. Each year at ARSAG Omega and USN personnel meet to review all aspects of engineering and procedures. This is an opportunity to establish product improvement, fault analysis, reliability, mishap reporting and any other issues generated by either Omega or US Navy. This forum also addresses dispatch reliability, maintenance issues, and mission completion rates. A constant exchange of information is provided through panel work groups (ARSAG brochure attached).
11. Omega operations personnel are in daily pre-mission contact with US Navy personnel. All missions are briefed by Navy operations to Omega operations including the mission crew in accordance with each Tasking Order issued. Omega operations confirm maintenance status of mission aircraft to USN daily or pre-mission. Omega complies with all Navy reporting procedures for Non Mission Capable (NMC) aircraft. Post-mission, Omega submits Aircraft Technical Logs to US Navy detailing, flight times, fuel data, defects and rectification of maintenance items.

Maintenance

12. The Navy ensures aircraft airworthiness oversight by contractual commitment which requires Omega to possess and maintain an FAA airworthiness Certificate at all times. This certificate is renewed by FAA/DAR every 90 days on each contracted aircraft. Each renewal requires the DAR to visit the aircraft, and access aircraft serviceability and maintenance status. Status of inspections items such as FAA Airworthiness Directives (AD) is also supplied by Omega to the DAR (every 90 days) for his review. Omega is obliged to inform the Navy any non-compliance that would prevent the issuance of the certificate.
13. To ensure continuing compliance with the requirements of the above certificate Omega maintains the aircraft to an FAA/OEM Approved Maintenance Program using FAA certified (A&P) mechanics and FAA approved 145 repair facilities.
14. Any and all modifications made to Omega Tankers are approved by Navair engineers. On completion of each MOD, Navair inspect the aircraft and also review the data for compliance.
15. Omega performance is reviewed throughout the year by the Navy and a performance report is issued by them annually (last three years attached).
16. Each year Navair Commercial Air Services hold a Program Management Review at selected Navy locations. These meetings are sponsored by a Flag Officer and hosted by the Program Manager to review the oversight delta between FAA airworthiness oversight and Navy requirements.