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Mitsubishi continues to upgrade MU-2 support

by Irwin Stambler

Several steps to add to the support structure for MU-2 operators were announced at NBAA 2002 by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries America's aircraft products support division. These include appointment of Aero Air of Hillsboro, Ore., as an authorized Mitsubishi MU-2 service center, and Turbine Aircraft Components (TAC) of Addison, Texas, as exclusive distributor for a number of aircraft overhaul components. MHIA representatives also discussed a program to develop a new cockpit shoulder harness for MU-2 designs and the status of the MHIA-supported PROP (Pilot's Review of Proficiency) program.

The agreement with Aero Air brings to six the total of authorized MU-2 service centers in North America. The company is a full-service FBO, charter, maintenance and aircraft management company offering 24-hr service. It will provide full MU-2 airframe, engine and avionics services. Meleta Hanson, knowledgeable about MU-2 components, formerly with Epps Air Service, will handle parts sales for Aero Air.

TAC will serve as the exclusive overhaul parts distributor for MU-2 series landing gear, motors and actuators. The company will provide warehousing and logistical support to MU-2 customers for overhaul components. It has contracted with Professional Aircraft Accessories of Titusville, Fla., as the overhaul agency for landing gear systems and also is negotiating with that organization for overhaul of motors and actuators.



Operators of Mitsubishi MU-2s, such as this California-based Marquise seen on the taxiway at Orlando Executive Airport this week, enjoy unprecedented support from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, despite the airplane's orphan status.

MHIA is continuing to support the PROP program, which it runs with assistance from Turbine Aircraft Services and co-sponsors SimCom and Honeywell. The PROP 2002 series, held earlier this year, enrolled experienced pilots such as Bill White, chief pilot for Keller Companies, and former test pilot and astronaut Col. Frank Borman. Borman commented, "Even with more than 4,000 hours of MU-2 time, PROP is rewarding, on target and thought-provoking. Mitsubishi should be commended for its efforts. Any MU-2 pilot who does not attend is missing a great opportunity."

Representatives at the MHIA MU-2 exhibit at NBAA '02 (Booth No. 2407)

can discuss those projects as well. The agreement the company signed with Pacific Scientific Co. to develop a new cockpit shoulder harness system. The system, which features a three-point buckle with a positive locking mechanism, can be used in older MU-2s not originally equipped with shoulder harness, as well as a replacement for harnesses in late-model aircraft. Noel Takayama, MHIA general manager, said his group will serve as exclusive distributor, with deliveries expected to begin before year-end upon FAA approval.