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Roll-out of the first G.222 aircraft, refurbished and modernized with systems and avionics, at Alenia Aeronautica's Capodichino plant

Alenia Aeronautica held a ceremony at its Capodichino (Naples) location for the roll-out of the first G.222 aircraft, ordered by the United States Air Force (USAF), to be restored to airworthiness, and modernized with new systems and avionics.

In September 2008, Alenia North America (a company wholly owned by Alenia Aeronautica) was awarded a contract by the U.S. Air Force, valued at \$287 million, to provide 18 refurbished G.222 tactical transport aircraft that will be transferred by the Combined Security Transition Command in Kabul to the reconstructed Afghan Air Force, the Afghan National Army Air Corps (ANAAC).

The first flight of the upgraded G.222 aircraft is anticipated for the end of next month and delivery of the aircraft will begin in September 2009.

The 18 G.222, which include two versions configured for VIP transport, belong to different production groups that range from 1977 to 1985 and meet different production standards. All of the aircraft will be modernized with the configuration of systems and avionics, new autopilot systems and ballistic protection, in addition to necessary maintenance, modifications and modernization.

Giovanni Bertolone, CEO of Alenia Aeronautica, commented, "This day represents a significant stage in the sphere of a very important contract signed by Alenia North America, as prime contractor, with the American Government in September 2008; confirming the continued vitality of the program, after years of operating service with the Italian Air Force (AMI). The capacity of tactical transport, the operational validity and the superior qualification of the aircraft to complete complex missions, for which it was designed, have been further exalted by the C-27J program, the actual leader in the market segment. The Afghan G.222 will be required to operate in difficult scenarios, in conditions of extreme altitude and temperature".

Giuseppe Giordo, CEO of Alenia North America said, "Alenia Aeronautica, with Alenia North America and Finmeccanica, has demonstrated again that it can offer products to the United States that meet the rigid and specific requirements outlined by the American Government, always *on time* and *on budget* in accordance with the requirements of the client. These 18 G.222 aircraft will give the reconstructed Afghan Air Force a great advantage in terms of the security and the stability of the region."

The G.222, in service until 2005 with the Italian Air Force (AMI) and used also by the United States Air Force in the 1990s under the name C-27A, is a twin-engine, tactical transport, turboprop aircraft. Developed as a true military airlifter, the G.222 is dependable, robust, and capable of taking off in almost any operating condition, even from short and unprepared airstrips.

The G.222 is still in operation with a large number of air forces around the world, including: the Nigerian Air Force, the Royal Thai Air Force, the Ejercito Argentino, the U.S. State Department, and the Italian Air Force (version VS, electronic warfare); thanks also to the efficiency of the logistical support provided by Alenia Aeronautica.

Alenia North America is a subsidiary of Alenia Aeronautica and part of the Finmeccanica Group. Its mission is to further expand the industrial and commercial presence of the Alenia Group in North America. Alenia North America Inc. is headquartered in Washington, D.C. with offices in Seattle, Washington; Long Beach, California; Fort Worth, Texas; and Smyrna, Georgia. Alenia North America - Canada, a subsidiary wholly owned by Alenia North America, has offices in Ottawa, Canada. Alenia North America is also a shareholder in several joint venture companies located in the United States. Global Aeronautica, a joint venture with The Boeing Company, located in North Charleston, South Carolina, performs significant integration and sub-assembly work for the Boeing 787 program. Global Military Aircraft Systems (GMAS), a joint venture with L-3 Communications Integrated Systems, is a center of excellence to support the C-27J in North America. GMAS is headquartered in Madison, Mississippi. Alenia North America has recently announced its intent to establish a new final assembly and production facility for the C-27J in Jacksonville, Florida. The C-27J is the world leader in the twin engine military tactical aircraft market with 121 units sold worldwide.