

## MODERNIZED C-27 SPARTAN TO BE OFFERED FOR ARMY'S FIXED-WING FCA FLEET

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Alenia Aeronautica and L-3 Communications are poised to offer an upgraded version of the Air Force's retired C-27 Spartan when the Army solicits proposals for its Future Cargo Aircraft fleet next month, according to Giuseppe Giordo, president and chief executive officer of Alenia North America.

The C-27J aircraft, based on the C-27A airframe, will have a different avionics architecture, propulsion system (powered by two Rolls Royce E 2300d2 engines), landing gear and more, Giordo told *Inside the Army* Aug. 31.

"We believe we can fulfill all of the requirements the U.S. Army has set for the FCA [program] and we believe we can also give more than what they are asking for," Giordo said.

The C-27J is able to travel at 350 knots, has a range of more than 2,400 nautical miles and can carry more than 25,000 pounds, Giordo said.

In 1999, the Air Force deactivated the 310th Airlift Squadron at Howard Air Force Base in Panama, the service's only C-27 squadron, sister publication *Inside the Air Force* reported in December 1998. Since then, the State Department has used the A-model platform for drug crop spraying operations in Colombia, according to the department's Web site.

As for the upgraded J-model, the Italian Air Force and the Hellenic Air Force have each ordered 12 C-27J platforms, according to Giordo.

Procurement of the Army's next-generation fleet of fixed-wing aircraft made headway last month with the release of a draft request for proposals (*ITA*, Aug. 29, p1).

The service's Future Cargo Aircraft is expected to be a commercially available, Federal Aviation Administration-certified aircraft to be used for logistical resupply, casualty evacuation, troop movement, airdrop operations, humanitarian assistance and homeland security support, according to the Aug. 19 presolicitation notice posted on the *Federal Business Opportunities* Web site.

"The Future Cargo Aircraft (FCA) program was established to address the operational shortfalls within fixed-wing cargo mission requirements noted in Operational Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom, provide commonality with other aviation platforms, and replace the C-26 and C-23 fleets and selected aircraft beginning in [fiscal year 2007] and ending in FY-25," the notice said.

Plans call for the Army to purchase 22 low-rate-initial-production platforms as a result of the contract award, according to the draft RFP. Additionally, the Army has adjusted the number of FCA platforms it intends to buy.

Initial plans called for the service to purchase 33 FCA platforms to replace its aging C-23 Sherpa fleet (*ITA*, April 18, p2). However, the presolicitation notice indicates the service is looking to purchase between one and 30 aircraft.

A final RFP is expected to be released in mid-October.

Raytheon and the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company's CASA North America have also teamed up to offer two aircraft for the Army's FCA program -- the C-295 and CN-235 (*ITA*, May 16, p11). -- *Ashley Roque*