



First Northrop Grumman KC-30 Tanker Begins Final Assembly

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LE BOURGET, France, June 18 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Northrop Grumman Corporation's (NYSE: NOC) first KC-30 Tanker will begin final assembly this week, reflecting the industrial team's commitment to the U.S. Air Force's KC-135 replacement program.

A photo accompanying this release is available at: <http://media.primezone.com/noc/>

"The first KC-30 Tanker platform's early entry into final assembly is evidence of our team's commitment to the KC-X program that we intend to win," said Paul Meyer, Northrop Grumman's vice president and general manager of the KC-30 program.

"The world's most modern and capable tanker will be ready to meet the U.S. Air Force's test and delivery requirements right away. Early assembly of the first development aircraft, D-1, is a tangible reflection of the KC-30 Tanker team's ability to reduce risk and ensure a time-certain development process.

"We're prepared to deliver D-1 to the Air Force this November, one month after projected contract award," Meyer concluded.

Drawing on suppliers in the United States and other allied nations, final assembly of the first KC-30 Tanker platform -- an A330-200 commercial airliner derivative -- will be performed at the state-of-the-art final assembly line in Toulouse, France. If selected by the U.S. Air Force, the KC-30 Tanker will ultimately be built at a new final assembly and modification center in Mobile, Alabama. This center would directly employ more than 1,000 aerospace engineers and technicians at rate production.

The KC-30 Tanker benefits from the A330's active production line and its fully operational industrial supply chain, as these jetliners continue their sales success with airlines and government customers worldwide. To date, more than 1,110 A330/A340s have been sold, with approximately 800 delivered to international operators and over 240 A330s in current backlog.

Northrop Grumman has assembled a powerful U.S. and allied industrial team to produce and supply KC-30 Tankers for the U.S. Air Force, basing this aircraft on the A330 Multi-role Tanker Transport -- which won the last three tanker competitions to support the air forces of Australia, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates.

The Royal Australian Air Force's initial KC-30B has now been outfitted with its aerial refueling systems and has entered the validation flight testing phase. Following its maiden flight on June 15, this aircraft was flown to France to participate in this week's Paris Air Show at Le Bourget Airport.

"Robust production and a strong, proven supply chain are critical to meeting the Air Force's aggressive schedule for modernizing its tanker fleet," said John H. Young, Jr., CEO of EADS North America Tankers, a business unit of EADS North America. "The KC-30 Tanker benefits from both of these key elements. Sales of the A330 are continuing at a brisk pace for an aircraft recognized worldwide as the most modern and capable in its category, as reflected in the fact that A330/A340 production output is increasing to the impressive rate of more than two aircraft per week."

About the KC-30: Northrop Grumman's KC-30 Tanker carries 45,000 more pounds of fuel than a KC-135 or any competitor, providing a significant boost to the U.S. Air Force's global reach. The KC-30 is also designed to refuel Navy and coalition aircraft, and to serve as a multi-role transport aircraft to move passengers, cargo and medical evacuation patients. The KC-30 incorporates defense systems, precision fly-by-wire technology, and the ability to integrate a communications suite and a global support network.

The KC-30 will be assembled in Mobile, Ala., and create or support more than 25,000 U.S. jobs. It will be built by a world-class industrial team led by Northrop Grumman, and includes EADS, General Electric Aviation, Honeywell and Sargent Fletcher.

Northrop Grumman Corporation is a \$30 billion global defense and technology company whose 120,000 employees provide innovative systems, products, and solutions in information and services, electronics, aerospace and shipbuilding to government and commercial customers worldwide.

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