SAVANNAH, Ga., May 19 -- A modification program of some 16 months at Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation has resulted in highly successful initial performance testing of the Gulfstream II business jet chosen for the NASA Propfan Test Assessment (PTA) program at Lockheed-Georgia Company.

Lockheed-Georgia is the prime contractor for the program, under funding and management by NASA's Lewis Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio. The program is designed to evaluate the structural integrity and noise characteristics of a new high-speed, fuel-saving propeller by flight testing it mounted on the left wing of the Gulfstream II.

Gulfstream began wing structural changes in October 1985 and continued modifications to the Gulfstream II, bought by Lockheed in May 1986, until March 6, 1987, when the aircraft was flown for the first time from Savannah International Airport. The aircraft was then flown to Lockheed, Marietta, Ga., on March 13, 1987.

"Both wings were strengthened and a 2,000-pound balance boom added to the right wing," says Ron Wodkowski, PTA program manager at Gulfstream. An extensive instrumentation and data recording system has been installed on the aircraft, including more than 600 sensors, signal conditioning and recording equipment for continuous in-flight readings.

Pilots and engineers from both Lockheed and Gulfstream have praised the performance of the Gulfstream II, chosen for its stability, reliability and maneuverability. NASA also uses modified Gulfstream II jets for astronaut-pilot training in the space shuttle program.
The PTA program utilizes a nine-foot-diameter, eight-blade propfan developed by the Hamilton Standard Division of United Technologies. The propfan drive system consists of a modified Allison 570 industrial turbo-shaft engine and a modified Allison T-56 reduction gearbox. The QEC (quick engine change) composite/metal nacelle was designed and fabricated by Rohr Industries.

Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation is a subsidiary of the Chrysler Corporation, operating more than two million square feet of manufacturing facilities in Savannah, Ga., Oklahoma City, Okla., and Long Beach, Calif., with more than 4,000 employees. The company's newest business jet aircraft, the Gulfstream IV, has now received Type Certification from the Federal Aviation Administration. Gulfstream expects to deliver 44 Gulfstream IV's this year as the beginning units in the company's 100-unit, $1.5 billion sales backlog.

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