Bell 212 Fleet Maintenance for Argentine Air Force

Overview
We endeavor to become the industry leader in comprehensive solutions for the U.S. manufactured legacy aircraft and helicopter platforms we support. Critical to our success is developing a partnership with our customers with the common goal of maintaining their platforms flight ready. The collaboration starts in the field, with the customer, to gain a hands-on understanding of the problem. In this case an existing customer, the Argentine Air Force (AAF), had been contracted by the United Nations to operate a small fleet of Bell 212 helicopters in Haiti for a Peace Keeping Mission. Haiti, in particular, presented several extraordinary logistical, operational and administrative challenges that were beyond the scope of Air Force’s in-country capabilities and were looking for solutions. The AAF looked to the international community by way of an international tender, for a turn-key solution that would maintain their fleet flight ready.

Background
As platforms age, OEM support for sustainment diminishes and end-users tasked with maintaining operational readiness are faced with critical supply chain deficits. Kellstrom Defense (KD) offers their military customer base legacy aircraft solutions that address these shortfalls. We are a global provider of comprehensive support for U.S. manufactured legacy defense platforms including fighters, transports, patrol aircraft and helicopters. Our “Total Support” approach encompasses strategic distribution, repair & overhaul, engineering & manufacturing, modernization solutions and overall program management.

KD prides itself on providing program management solutions including customized supply chain management programs, a service that proved to be a perfect match for the AAF’s needs.

Business Need
The Argentine Air Force was under contract with the United Nations to operate its Bell 212 fleet in Haiti. The terms of that contract mandated that the AAF have two available helicopters flight ready at all times for day and night missions and a minimum of 200 flight hours per month. In order to comply with the terms of the contract, the AAF supplied three Bell 212 helicopters, a rotating crew of three pilots and a ground crew of six.

The AAF was not in a position to resolve the operational challenges associated with maintaining the fleet flight ready in the harsh and remote conditions that flying in Haiti presented. The AAF submitted an international tender for a company to provide turn-key, in-country, fleet maintenance of their Bell 212’s.

Solution
In 2007, KD (formerly Merex) was awarded the contract. KD headquarters in Camarillo, CA and their then South America Operations office “Artelcom, S.A. de C.V.” located in Buenos Aires, Argentina launched a coordinated program management effort to address all challenges. The Camarillo site utilized its existing administrative infrastructure to manage regulatory compliance, financing and supplier relationships. Artelcom leveraged its AAF and local vendor relationships, geographic proximity/familiarity and Latin America logistics expertise to project manage the complete supply chain management scope including all of its operational challenges from Buenos Aires and with a local in-house team based in Port au Prince:

» Inadequate repair/maintenance capabilities in-country
» Sources of supply located in Miami, FL
» Complicated logistics involving supplier/repair facilities in Miami, Puerto Rico and Colombia

KD Maintains Fleet Flight-Ready for UN Peace Keeping Mission

Customized Solutions. In-Country SCM.

» Coordination of major/minor inspections of 3 helicopters in-country (outside of Haiti as required)
» Operational/Administrative coordination with AAF personnel in Argentina, Washington, and Haiti

Benefits
In spite of extraordinary operational and administrative challenges, KD has been able to successfully maintain a 95% availability of required assets year over year over the life of the contract (now in its eighth renewal year) with a 100% safety record.

Since 2007, and by law, the AAF has submitted an international tender every year for this contract and every year, KD has won and the AAF is able to continue to support the Haiti UN Peace

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