CHAPMAN FREEBORN DELIVERS EFFICIENT LOGISTICS FOR LEONARDO AIRCRAFT M-346 DEMONSTRATION TOUR ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

News / Airlines

Chapman Freeborn successfully supported Leonardo Aircraft during a complex, multi-location M-346 demonstration tour across the United States and Canada. The three-month operation ran from September to November, spanning 11 air show locations and requiring extensive coordination of personnel, equipment, and aircraft logistics across multiple regions.

The demonstrations formed part of a wider agreement with a U.S. manufacturer in support of supplying new aircraft for a government contract. Two aircraft were involved in the operation and supported by Chapman Freeborn's Flight Support team: the M-346, a two-seat platform that served as the primary demonstration aircraft, and the C-27J, which was used to transport demonstration personnel and essential equipment throughout the tour.

Chapman Freeborn's Flight Support team delivered end-to-end operational and logistical services across all locations, display airfields and alternate airfields. These included:

- flight planning, weather services and NOTAM support;
- airport handling coordination and tax management;

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- fuel release for both aircraft;
- GPU and air start unit support;
- hangar space, office facilities, and briefing rooms;
- aircraft security;
- airport entry pass authorisations.

During the initial setup phase, the Flight Support team was responsible for arranging all pre-flight operations, including ground handling, hotel accommodation (HOTAC), crew transportation, and daily aircraft displays to U.S. Government stakeholders. This involved ensuring that each location could fully support the clients operational and presentation requirements.

Through proactive and detailed planning, the team ensured that all aspects of ground handling for this highly complex operation were in place. This included the provision of liquid oxygen, now a rarity in modern flight operations, for the C-27J at every demonstration airfield across the United States and last-minute request for a Canada demonstration. In parallel, the team arranged and coordinated, with the assistance of the Chapman Freeborn USA office, dedicated ground transport to accompany the tour throughout the U.S. for oversized support equipment that could not be loaded onto the C-27J.

Managing an operation of this scale and complexity presented significant challenges, requiring the team to rely on clear, consistent communication to ensure effective delivery throughout the tour. The Flight Support team was responsible for coordinating large numbers of personnel with varied operational and welfare requirements, while synchronising crew movements, equipment logistics, and fuel availability across multiple airports and time zones.

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The team managed a broad range of stakeholders, including Leonardo and its end clients, ensuring operational consistency and service continuity throughout the September to November demonstration period. This required careful planning, adaptability, and the effective application of the team's operational expertise, particularly given the considerable scale of personnel logistics involved.

Over the course of the tour, the Flight Support team successfully:

- Coordinated 1,503 hotel room bookings
- Arranged 1,379 crew and staff meals
- Organised 509 ground transport vehicles for Leonardo personnel

These figures reflect the intensity and scope of the logistics effort required to support the programme, as well as the team's ability to maintain high operational standards across a geographically dispersed and time-critical deployment.

Dave Selby, Commercial Manager, Flight Support commented: "This project demonstrated the strength of our air show flight support capabilities and our ability to deliver consistent, reliable service across multiple locations over an extended period. The success of the tour is a testament to our team's expertise, our global support network, and our commitment to meeting client needs in demanding, high-pressure environments."

Two members of the Flight Support team, supported by the wider Flight Support office team, which monitored and coordinated the operation from start to finish, were integral to the successful delivery of this deployment. Alexandra Sharrock, who attended the first phase of the tour, and Vivienne Sinclair, who attended the second phase, acted as Chapman Freeborn's primary on-site representatives throughout the operation.

Clear and consistent communication, strong industry relationships, and robust back-office support proved essential in managing real-time operational changes and ensuring that all services were delivered as planned. This combined on-site and remote support model enabled the team to respond quickly to evolving requirements while maintaining operational continuity across multiple locations.

Feedback from Leonardo highlights the value and impact of the Flight Support team's contribution: "I would like to thank Chapman Freeborn for providing such excellent support during the complex and intense M-346 demo tour. The constant presence of Chapman representatives in both the U.S. and Canada was fundamental. Alexandra Sharrock and Vivienne Sinclair deserve special praise for their professionalism and dedication, which were key to making the project a success. I can sincerely say that your support was highly appreciated by the entire team present on site." Massimo Sorgato, Leonardo Aircraft

Chapman Freeborn provides flight support and air cargo charter services to major corporations, governments, NGOs, relief agencies, and high net-worth individuals. With over 50 years of experience, the company offers extensive global coverage through its well-established partner network.

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