



THE SHAH'S JETSTARS



THE LOCKHEED 1329 JETSTAR IN IRANIAN SERVICE

Earlier this year the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force officially retired the last surviving example of its fleet of Lockheed JetStars, thus marking the end of the type's international military and governmental career. Iranian aviation historian **BABAK TAGHVAEE** describes the evolution of the sleek bizjet into a military transport and chronicles the type's career in Iran

IN JANUARY 2020 the world's last remaining Lockheed L-1329 JetStar on strength with a military air arm was officially withdrawn from service by the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF). Some 42 of the total of 202 L-1329s produced by Lockheed during 1960–80 were used by the governments and air forces of 11 countries across the world. The Iranian government became the type's third foreign customer in 1962, and kept the aircraft in service

for an impressive 58 years. Four examples of the JetStar were acquired by Iran, of which one crashed; one was sold in 1963 and two are in permanent storage at Mehrabad International Airport in Tehran.

A 'STAR IS BORN

By the mid-1950s the USAF was in need of a replacement type for its large fleet of largely wartime-vintage light utility/transport aircraft.

ABOVE The Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force's last operational JetStar, serial 5-9003, on finals into Mehrabad in March 2009. The IRIAF operated a total of four examples of the type in three variants. This aircraft, initially an Iraqi Airways machine, was appropriated by the IRIAF after having been flown to Iran to avoid the Gulf War in 1991. AUTHOR



PHILIP JARRETT COLLECTION

In response, Lockheed developed the CL-329 to meet the specifications of the USAF's Utility Transport Experimental (UCX) requirement for a light liaison and transport jet aircraft, to carry 14 passengers or 5,000lb (2,300kg) of cargo. However, owing to severe budget restrictions imposed on military spending in 1957, the USAF's plans to procure a UCX machine were cancelled, but development of the CL-329 project was continued by the manufacturer as a private venture. The first prototype, N329J, made its maiden flight on September 4, 1957, powered by a pair of British-built Bristol Orpheus turbojet engines of 4,850lb (2,200kg)-thrust each.

Serial production of the aircraft began at Lockheed's factory at Marietta, Georgia, in November 1958, and the company's gamble appeared to have paid off when the USAF selected the type as a crew trainer — designated T-40A-LM — to fulfil its Utility Trainer Experimental (UTX) programme. A few months later the USAF's plans changed again and North American's smaller NA-246 Sabreliner — designated T-39 in USAF service — was selected as a cheaper option.

Owing to difficulties regarding production of the Orpheus engine under licence in the USA, Lockheed was forced to find an American replacement for the powerplant, with the Pratt & Whitney (P&W) JT12A turbojet ultimately being selected. As the latter was less powerful — 3,000lb (1,360kg)-thrust — Lockheed designed a twin-engine mounting, one on each side of the rear fuselage, to accommodate a total of four JT12A-6s, to create the definitive Model 1329 JetStar. The second prototype, N329K, was so modified and made its maiden flight with the new configuration in January 1960.

By the spring of 1960 Lockheed had received orders for the type from civilian operators and two from the Canadian government. The first production Model 1329, N9201R (c/n 5001), flew for the first time on October 21, 1960, and was

ABOVE CL-329 first prototype N329J (c/n 1001) made its maiden flight from the Lockheed Air Terminal at Burbank, California, on September 4, 1957, fitted with two Bristol Orpheus turbojets and minus the wing-mounted slipper tanks that became such a distinctive feature of production aircraft. This example survives at the Museum of Flight in Everett, Washington, USA.

delivered to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) with the registration N1, to be used to transport personnel.

AIR FORCE ONE (AND A HALF)

From c/n 5002, the next 60 production L-1329s were given the company designation JetStar 6, and were produced for the corporate market and domestic and foreign government agencies. These were followed by 66 JetStar 8s, fitted with more powerful 3,300lb (1,497kg)-thrust JT12A-8 turbojet engines.

In addition, 16 military examples, designated C-140s, were produced for the USAF. The first five of the latter, ordered in 1960 and fitted with P&W J60-P-5 engines, the military version of the JT12A-6, were designated C-140A-LMs with serials 59-5958 to 59-5962, and were delivered to the USAF's Air Force Communications Service (AFCS) from September 1961. With the establishment of the 1866th Facility Checking Flight (Service Evaluation) at Richards-Gebaur AFB, near Kansas City, Missouri, on July 1, 1962, the USAF started using these five aircraft for calibration of airport navigational aids such as ILS and NDB systems.

The USAF also ordered five C-140B-LM utility transport variants — serials 62-4197 to 62-4201 — which were equipped with a convertible cabin for easily switchable passenger and cargo configurations. Although these were ordered after the C-140A-LMs, they were delivered in April 1961, five months before the calibration aircraft entered service. In addition, six VIP-configured VC-140B-LMs were ordered, these