

Vol. XLIV · Special Issue · 2020

ISSN 0722-3226

MILITARY TECHNOLOGY



GERMAN **Luftwaffe** AIR FORCE





Our Priority is to Satisfy Customers

Interview with Jean Simon,
CEO, OEM Defence Services SAS



(Photo: OEM DS)

Jean Simon

Since November 2019 CEO of OEM DS

1989-1993	Technical Studies Manager, Software Manager navigation system MIRAGE 2000D, R&D Centre, Safran Electronics & Defense
1993-1996	R&D Centre: Project Manager development navigation system for MIRAGE
1996-2000	R&D Centre: Project Manager development navigation subsystem for NH90
2000-2007	R&D Centre: Product Line Manager Radio Navigation and Gyroscopes, then Digital Embedded Computers
2007-2010	Retrofit Programmes Unit: Programme Director of MIRAGE F1 Morocco and Mi-24 Ukraine programmes
2010-2015	Avionics Division: Programme Manager Officer (PMO) Division
2015-2019	Avionics Division – Customer Support Unit: VP Customer Support Programmes



Armed Forces are evolving and need to be able to focus on their core activities while relying on dependable and flexible services from industry. Military customers also require more efficient logistics support with enhanced equipment availability, as well as cost-effective solutions that satisfy defence budget constraints.

OEM Defence Services SAS (OEM DS) is a joint venture company between five major European OEMs: Liebherr Aerospace & Transportation SAS; Diehl Aerospace GmbH; Thales AVS France SAS; Safran Electronics & Defense; and Safran Aerosystems Services Europe (former Zodiac

Aerospace Services Europe) and their affiliates. The company offers tailored support solutions leveraging the synergies and efficiencies between its shareholders and other partners. It provides integrated industrial support solutions to meet the specific needs of national armed forces, while striving to be as cost-effective as possible to the customers.

MITech: How is workshare within OEM DS organized? What are your company's responsibilities and those of your partners?

Simon: OEM DS is the prime contractor and the focus point for customer contact. The company is in charge of:



MH90 of the French Air Force.
(Photos: Airbus Helicopters/Eurocopter)

- Tender management and coordination with OEMs;
- Programme and contract management;
- Quality assurance management;
- Support engineering and technical event management;
- Supply chain management;
- Obsolescence, risk coordination.

OEM DS partners' responsibilities are: Repair and overhaul activities; spares manufacturing activities; obsolescence management; and other services such as training and technical assistance.

MilTech: Can third parties participate during a bidding process and provisioning of services? What are the requirements to do so?

Simon: Yes, it is possible for non-Joint Venture companies to participate during a bidding process and for provisioning of services. OEM DS has signed, for example, a partnership with Europavia known as Calman, covering maintenance of the NH90 fleet for the Spanish armed forces. OEM DS is also partner with several other OEMs such as Becker Avionics, Autoflug and AmSafe Bricport.

The following requirements must be met in order to allow new partners:

- Approval of the shareholders;
- Complete trade compliance;
- Signature of a Non-Disclosure Agreement between parties;
- Approval of the terms and conditions negotiated by OEM DS.

MilTech: What is your product and service portfolio of?

Simon: The OEM DS portfolio includes the products of all shareholders and other partners. Currently, OEM DS is active on several platforms such as: NH90 (with more than 100 Line Replaceable Units (LRUs); A400M (with over 400 LRUs); attack helicopter TIGER; C-130 TRANSALL; PUMA; SUPER PUMA; and COUGAR. Furthermore, we are working on expanding to cover onboard equipment, for example, on the SUPER LYNX, C-130 HERCULES, CASA 295 and Eurofighter. We can provide all services related to military support such as repair and overhaul activities, spares distribution and other services like training and technical assistance.

MilTech: What are the differences between maintenance of new weapon systems such as NH90, Eurofighter and A400M, compared with classic systems such as TORNADO and TRANSALL.

Simon: On classic weapon systems, the maintenance concept is more 'time and materials,' since it is difficult to offer a fixed price for repair activities compared to new weapon systems, for which maintenance can be achieved via:

- Selection from a price catalogue;
- Support by the hour;
- Fleet availability commitment.

MilTech: What opportunities does OEM DS see for improving operational availability of such weapon systems?

Simon: In order to improve operational fleet availability, OEM DS can provide several simulations through state-of-the-art lifecycle management

software, according to the customer's forecast requirements. This tool allows determination of the volume and associated costs for spares required to achieve a specific operational availability target.

MilTech: What further benefits can you offer your customers?

Simon: OEM DS offers its end customers the benefit of an agile organization, backed by its OEMs. The end customers have only one point of contact instead of several at each OEM. By going through OEM DS, the end customers considerably reduce turnaround time and of course costs.

MilTech: Please tell us a little more about your customer base. Is it only European or global?

Simon: OEM DS is proud and honored to serve the following global customers for the associated aircraft programmes:

- NH90 – French MoD (DGA), Finnish MoD (FDLOGCOM), Swedish MoD (FMV), Norwegian MoD (NDLO), The Netherlands MoD (RNLAF), Spanish MoD (DGAM), Omani MoD (DCLA/RAFO), Airbus Helicopters and Saab.
- C-160 – Sabena Technics (Operator: French MoD)
- Puma, Super Puma, Cougar – NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA).

OEM DS offers its services to Ministries of Defence and other organizations who own and operate the platforms that belong to the target group already mentioned.

MilTech: How can customers engage with OEM DS?

Simon: Customers can engage with OEM DS through multi-year contracts or on a case-by-case basis with purchase order(s).

MilTech: Why should a customer select OEM DS as its prime supplier?

Simon: OEM DS would recommend selecting us as a prime supplier by highlighting:

- We are a single streamlined organization that simplifies contract and programme management;
- Enhanced synergy between OEMs for support solutions and supply chain rationalization;
- Optimized management of risks with mitigation of them at the right level;
- We are a customer-oriented company with an agile organization, skilled resources, a smart information system, proven performances and high value for money.

MilTech: How do you position yourself for possible future military aircraft programmes?

Simon: With the support of OEM DS shareholders and partners, we are well positioned to support all future military programmes.

MilTech: Do you see any chance to approach the US market?

Simon: The US defence market is currently not a target for us, but in case our shareholders might sign development and production contracts with US-based OEMs, OEM DS would be capable of supporting such programmes as well.

MilTech: How many employees do you have?

Simon: OEM DS' core team is seconded from its shareholders; this safeguards the business and product know-how. Due to the value creation being conducted by the shareholders, we can perform our services with a very lean structure.

MilTech: What is your financial track record?

Simon: In 2018, OEM DS was included by the Financial Times and Les Echos in the group of Europe's fastest growing companies. In recent years, OEM DS achieved an average annual turnover of about €30 million. Looking ahead, OEM DS management is confident in growing its business even further in the future.

Interview conducted by Jürgen Rosenthal



A400M of the Spanish Air Force.
(Photo: Airbus Military)