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Field Aviation Earns STC for Dash 8 Air-Operable Door

Cargo door retractable in flight for paratroop, equipment drops,
Search and Rescue, and Maritime Patrol missions

Toronto, April 25, 2006.....Field Aviation, specialists in modifications for application to special mission and maritime patrol aircraft, has gained a Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) from Transport Canada for a unique modification which allows the Bombardier Dash 8 rear cargo door to be opened during flight.

Identifying an international demand for the unique mod in military, para-military and forest fire “smokejumper” exercises, Field Aviation developed and funded the STC independently. Transport Canada issued the first certificate, covering the Dash 8 Series 300, on March 21 of this year.

The manually operated, inward-opening plug-type door can be raised at all altitudes and speeds up to normal operating, with the optimum drop speed calculated at 105 knots. The Dash 8 cabin is large enough to carry up to 30 paratroopers or smokejumpers, several life rafts, 8,000 lbs. of emergency equipment, or a variety of maritime patrol supplies. The wide opening also allows a stable and distortion-free photo platform.

Joar Gronlund, Field Aviation’s Vice-President, Business Development, is confident the Dash 8 door mod will find success internationally. “The airframe is rugged and has sufficient cabin volume to make purposeful missions possible,” he said. “Its long range is ideal for offshore patrol, and the reliability of the airplane is well-established. Our door mod will appeal to coast guards, firefighting units, customs patrol, search and rescue, as well as paratroop/forest fire personnel training and transport, and delivering emergency supplies to remote areas and accident sites.”

During testing, Field proved that no adverse aerodynamic characteristics were evident at any speed or altitude. The structural modifications include a proprietary fuselage-mounted air deflector, which reduces air disturbance in the opening, while preventing precipitation from entering the cabin.

“We have many years’ experience in supplying special mission and maritime patrol airplanes, and with this new offering the Dash 8-300 becomes even more useful,” Gronlund added. Field has supplied turboprop and pure-jet maritime patrol aircraft to several customers, including the U.S. Customs and Border Protection service, the Royal Danish Air Force, Australia’s **Coastwatch** and the Swedish Government.

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The Dash 8 platform features a T-tail empennage, clear of paratroopers or equipment exiting the aircraft. The cargo door measures 50" wide by 60" tall for easy egress of personnel or equipment. The Dash 8 endurance of over 8 hours adds to its patrol mission effectiveness.

Retrofit kits for the Air-operable door are also available to operators, and can be installed with minimum downtime. Field is currently completing engineering and testing of the modification for Dash 8 Series 100 and 200 variants.

Field Aviation, formed in 1947, is based in Toronto, Ontario and Calgary, Alberta, and provides services to the business aviation and special-purpose market internationally. Hangar and ramps occupy over 500,000 square feet.

The company employs more than 400 people in Toronto and Calgary and provides a full range of maintenance and modification services in both centers. Field is the Canadian Sales Representative for Raytheon Beech and Hawker business and regional aircraft, complemented by a used aircraft sales agency.

Field also provides spares manufacturing support for OEMs such as Bombardier de Havilland and Bombardier Regional Aircraft; performs avionics installations, cabin refurbishments and defense support and sales.

Field Aviation
DASH-8 Air-Operable Door



John Auld