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MRO 360°

Runway Boots

Effective landing gear maintenance

P2F Conversions

Life extension for passenger aircraft

RFID Technology

Impactful tool transforming aircraft maintenance

SkySelect

Intelligence to make faster decisions

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Dear Industry Colleagues,

This month in our first feature article we decided to take a look at the world of landing gear maintenance and, in particular, how to optimise the whole process, which is a challenge in itself bearing in mind the nature of the work involved and the daily stresses landing gears are subjected to.

In addition, in our second feature article, we thought it would be a good time to explore what is happening in the sphere of passenger-to-freighter conversions, whether demand post the COVID pandemic has remained since its uptick at the time, and what the future likely holds.

It's unlikely you have ever wondered what connection security tags attached to clothes to reduce in-store theft may have with a major improvement in aircraft maintenance, but our article on the role of RFID (radio-frequency identification) will explain all and reveal yet another classic example of how technology designed for one task can be successfully adapted to achieve something very different.

Finally, in the first of our series of "mythbusters", we felt it would be good to take a slightly more in-depth look at line maintenance and how its role in the whole scheme of things is perhaps undervalued, especially in comparison to heavy maintenance C-checks.

As always, I hope you enjoy this month's issue.

Torsten Tamm
Publisher

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Effective landing gear maintenance

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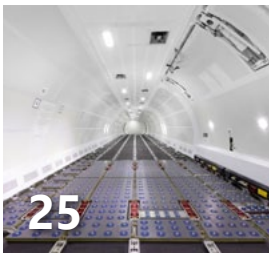

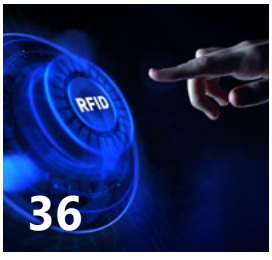

FDH Aero deepens COMAC ties to support C919 programme

COMAC C919 aircraft © *AirTeamImages*

FDH Aero (FDH), a global supplier of aerospace and defence supply chain solutions, has signed a strategic partnership agreement with the Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (COMAC) and a long-term contract with COMAC's wholly owned subsidiary and manufacturing centre, Shanghai Aircraft Manufacturing (SAMC), to support the development of the C919 platform. Already among a small number of distributors supplying the C919 programme, FDH is expanding its role beyond the traditional buying and selling of hardware. Under the new agreements, the company will provide a broader range of technology and engineering support services directly to COMAC and SAMC. As part of the multi-commodity contract, FDH will supply hardware, electrical products, and chemical solutions, alongside engineering management support and additional value-added services aimed at strengthening the programme's supply chain capability. The COMAC C919 is a narrow-body, twin-engine commercial aircraft developed as China's domestic alternative in the global single-aisle market. The programme has reportedly secured more than 1,000 aircraft orders, underlining its growing strategic importance. Fred Short, FDH Aero's Executive Vice President of Global Sales, said the partnership aligns with FDH's strategy of delivering global support to key customers. He highlighted the company's continued investment in the Asia-Pacific region, noting that FDH began expanding its regional presence during the COVID period and has since established offices and stocking capabilities in Shanghai, Singapore and Guangzhou, among other locations.

FL Technics completes Job Air Technic acquisition

Job Air Technic hangar © *FL Technics*

FL Technics has completed its acquisition of Job Air Technic, formally bringing the Central European maintenance specialist into its expanding international network. The transaction, first announced last year, has now closed after all required conditions were met. The acquisition is positioned as a capacity and capability boost for FL Technics as it continues to scale its European operations. Job Air Technic's experienced workforce, established infrastructure and day-to-day operational expertise will be integrated into FL Technics Group, enabling the combined organisation to undertake a broader range of maintenance work and deliver greater flexibility to airlines, lessors and aircraft operators. As integration begins, both companies have emphasised a focus on practical collaboration rather than disruption. The aim is to widen customer access to maintenance solutions across FL Technics' wider network while maintaining the safety, quality and reliability standards expected from both organisations. Job Air will continue operating during the transition, with gradual alignment to FL Technics' organisational and operational framework. Zilvinas Lapinskas, Chief Executive Officer of FL Technics, said the acquisition strengthens the group's footprint in Central Europe and provides additional maintenance capacity in a region of increasing importance to customers. He noted that Job Air's strong technical capabilities and established operation align well with FL Technics' growth strategy across Europe. With the transaction now completed, the next phase will centre on integrating teams, aligning processes and ensuring customers see direct benefits from the expanded scale and enhanced expertise.

WLFC completes first in-house core engine restoration

© WLFC

Willis Lease Finance Corporation (WLFC) has completed its first core engine restoration at its U.S.-based Willis Engine Repair Center®. The milestone project involved the successful restoration of a CFM56-7B core engine module and formally establishes the company's new in-house capability, branded Willis Module Shop™. This development represents a significant step in WLFC's broader strategy to deepen its technical and operational integration. By bringing core module restoration in-house, the company strengthens its control over engine lifecycle management while validating the commercial and technical viability of the module shop model. Post-maintenance testing of the restored module demonstrated strong recovery in exhaust gas temperature (EGT) margin — a critical performance indicator — underscoring the precision and effectiveness of the restoration process. The achievement comes at a pivotal moment for the aviation sector, as airlines and lessors transition from legacy aircraft and engine platforms to next-generation fleets. Against this backdrop, WLFC's enhanced restoration capability reinforces its vertically integrated service offering. Willis Module Shop™ complements the company's established programmes, including ConstantThrust® and ConstantAccess®, both designed to support customers through fleet transitions by providing predictable engine performance, improved asset availability and disciplined value recovery. According to Chief Executive Officer Austin C. Willis, although WLFC has long undertaken module swaps and exchanges, internalising core module restoration delivers tangible advantages. These include reduced maintenance expenditure, shorter turnaround times and greater operational control — benefits that strengthen both cost competitiveness and customer value.

Former Spirit Airlines' A320neos heading for disassembly

EirTrade Aviation (EirTrade), the Dublin-headquartered aviation asset management and trading specialist, has completed the acquisition of two Airbus A320neo aircraft formerly operated by Spirit Airlines, in partnership with Chicago-based aviation and rail lessor RESIDCO. The aircraft – MSN 10769 and MSN 10921 – are just four years and three and a half years old respectively, making them the youngest A320neo airframes ever to be dismantled. Disassembly is taking place in Goodyear, Arizona, with all parts to be transferred to EirTrade's parts hub in Dallas to support AOG requirements across the Americas, while strengthening the company's global inventory. Bill Thompson, Vice President of Origination & Trading for the Americas at EirTrade Aviation, said the transaction underlines the company's focus on modern aircraft assets. "We are focused on newer vintage aircraft to ensure our inventory contains the highest quality rotables, enabling us to support customers with components built to the latest modification standards. We have also acquired four sets of in-demand LRU and BFE components from the PW1100 engine type as part of this significant transaction," he said. EirTrade notes that more than 4,400 A320neo aircraft are currently in commercial service, with a further 7,200 on order. This figure excludes the 6,500 A320ceo aircraft already in operation, many of which share interchangeable components. "Given the size of the fleet and Airbus orderbook, this platform will remain the largest segment of the global commercial fleet, with demand for USM increasing accordingly," Thompson added.

Two Spirit Airlines Airbus A320neos to be dismantled © *EirTrade Aviation*

Chorus signs agreement to acquire Kadex Aero Supply

Chorus Aviation has agreed to acquire Kadex Aero Supply © *Shutterstock*

Chorus Aviation Inc. has announced an agreement to acquire Kadex Aero Supply (Kadex), a well-established independent distributor of aircraft parts, supplies, and repair and overhaul services. The transaction, which is subject to customary closing conditions, is expected to complete in the second quarter of 2026. Kadex, founded in 1994 by John Lavery and Ken Blow, has built a strong reputation within the aviation supply chain over more than three decades. The privately held company generated approximately US$60 million in revenue in 2025 and employs around 50 staff across two Canadian locations: its headquarters in Peterborough, Ontario, and a regional supply operation in Calgary, Alberta. Kadex maintains partnerships with more than 70 original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), enabling it to provide customers with a comprehensive, value-added procurement solution supported by deep technical expertise. For Chorus, the acquisition represents a strategic move to broaden and diversify its aviation, aerospace and defence services portfolio. President and Chief Executive Officer Colin Copp described the deal as a significant milestone in advancing the company's growth strategy. He emphasised Kadex's strong OEM and customer relationships, alongside its proven operating model and growing revenue base, as factors expected to contribute to more resilient and durable earnings over the long term. Kadex will also complement Chorus' existing used serviceable materials (USM) business by adding a synergistic distribution platform capable of delivering consistent cash flows. This alignment supports Chorus' stated objective of enhancing shareholder value through disciplined capital allocation and expansion into adjacent aviation services markets. From Kadex's perspective, joining Chorus marks a new chapter in its development. John Lavery, President and CEO of Kadex, noted that the company has spent over 30 years building a leading aviation supply enterprise focused on customer service and reliability. Becoming part of the Chorus group is viewed as an opportunity to accelerate growth, leverage broader resources, and strengthen its market position while preserving the brand and operational foundation established by its founders.


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EFW lands new A330 freighter conversion customer in China

Official contract signing between EFW and Hengqin Winglet © *EFW*

Elbe Flugzeugwerke (EFW), the joint venture between ST Engineering and Airbus, has expanded its footprint in the fast-growing Chinese aviation market through the signing of a new freighter conversion contract with Hengqin Winglet Aircraft Technology (Hengqin Winglet). The agreement marks the lessor's first Airbus A330 passenger-to-freighter (P2F) programme with EFW. EFW will undertake the A330P2F conversion at its partner facility in China, with work set to commence in mid-2026. The programme will be supported by technical planning and certification from EFW's headquarters in Dresden, Germany. "As a company with extensive expertise in leasing, trading and technical aircraft management, we are pleased to collaborate with EFW on the conversion of our A330 aircraft into a state-of-the-art freighter," said James Huang, Chief Executive Officer of Hengqin Winglet. The contract further strengthens EFW's growing customer base in China, a key driver of global freighter demand. Robust growth in express logistics and cross-border e-commerce continues to spur fleet expansion among operators and lessors. "We are excited to welcome a new customer into the EFW family of converted Airbus freighters," said Jordi Boto, CEO of EFW. "The A330P2F stands out as the future of the medium-sized air freighter segment, and we look forward to working with Hengqin Winglet in the near future to grow their A330P2F fleet."

Ryanair inks major engine support MoU with CFM

Olivier Andriès (l), CEO of Safran and Michael O'Leary (r), CEO of Ryanair *© CFM International*

Ryanair and CFM International (CFM) have signed an MoU for a long-term material services agreement to support Ryanair's entire fleet of approximately 2,000 CFM56 and LEAP engines powering its Boeing 737 aircraft. The MoU, announced by Michael O'Leary, CEO of Ryanair, and Olivier Andriès, CEO of Safran, one of CFM's two parent companies, covers the supply of spare parts and component repairs from CFM for two new engine MRO facilities that Ryanair plans to establish in Europe from 2029. CFM will also provide interim support through a services agreement for both CFM56 and LEAP engines until Ryanair's MRO sites become fully operational. The agreement marks a new milestone in the long-standing partnership between Ryanair and CFM, which dates back to 1998. Ryanair operates the world's largest fleet of CFM-powered Boeing aircraft and Europe's largest fleet of CFM56 engines, powering more than 400 Boeing Next-Generation 737 aircraft. The airline currently has more than 200 LEAP-1B-powered Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft in service and has placed an order for 150 Boeing 737 MAX 10 aircraft, with a further 150 options. Michael O'Learysaid: "We are pleased to extend our long-term partnership with CFM through this multi-billion-dollar spares support agreement. For the last 30 years, CFM has maintained all of Ryanair's CFM56 engines under a long-term 'power by the hour' contract. However, from 2029 onwards, Ryanair expects to bring the maintenance of its engines in-house, and we are pleased to do so with the help and support of our partner CFM. Ryanair will place substantial initial spare parts orders with CFM to support the opening of each of these two engine maintenance facilities. Once Ryanair brings all engine maintenance in-house, we expect this contract to be worth in excess of $1bn annually to CFM in spare engines and spare parts supply. This new agreement extends our 30-year partnership with CFM, and we look forward to working closely with CFM, Safran and GE to support what will be one of the world's largest commercial aircraft fleets and one of the largest Boeing 737 engine portfolios globally."

China Airlines signs Rolls-Royce TotalCare deal for 36 Trent XWB engines

China Airlines, the Taiwan-based carrier, has signed TotalCare agreements with Rolls-Royce covering 36 Trent XWB engines — comprising 30 Trent XWB-97 and six Trent XWB-84 — to power 15 Airbus A350-1000 and three A350-900 aircraft respectively. The A350-1000 order was announced by Airbus in 2025. Under the agreement, China Airlines has once again selected Rolls-Royce's comprehensive TotalCare service to provide long-term engine health monitoring and maintenance support. China Airlines currently operates 15 Trent XWB-powered A350 aircraft. With this latest addition, its total A350 fleet will increase to 33 aircraft. The Trent XWB-97 has demonstrated strong reliability and durability across seven years of service, accumulating more than four million engine flying hours. It has already incorporated the first two phases of its three-stage durability enhancement programme, delivering a 60% increase in time on wing. The third phase, due to enter service in 2028, will result in a doubling of time on wing in demanding operating environments and a 50% improvement under less challenging conditions.

Official signing of the TotalCare agreement *© Rolls-Royce*

Bombardier acquires Velocity Maintenance Solutions

© *Velocity Maintenance Solutions hangar*

Bombardier has released that it has acquired Velocity Maintenance Solutions, a maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services provider. Completed through Bombardier's U.S. subsidiary, Learjet Inc., the strategic acquisition marks a further milestone in the expansion of Bombardier's Services business. Velocity Maintenance Solutions adds valuable expertise and a strong reputation for service excellence to Bombardier's industry-leading service network. The company operates a 35,000 ft² hangar at Wilmington Airport, Delaware, and is supported by a fleet of 14 mobile repair trucks across the United States. This footprint will further strengthen Bombardier's ability to offer a broad range of maintenance, support and service solutions close to where customers fly. "Velocity Maintenance Solutions' capabilities and customer-focused culture make it an excellent fit for Bombardier. We are delighted to welcome their talented team and to support them as they continue to deliver exceptional service to their customers," said Paul Sislian, Executive Vice President, Aircraft Sales and Bombardier Aftermarket Services. "This acquisition reflects our ongoing commitment to continuously raising our service standards — an approach that has earned us number one rankings in industry surveys for two consecutive years." Bombardier continues to enhance its services offering through targeted investments, infrastructure expansion and strategic acquisitions. The addition of Velocity Maintenance Solutions strengthens Bombardier's U.S. presence and underlines its long-term commitment to providing operators with unrivalled service coverage and quality.

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Pem-Air widens LEAP engine support

PEM-AIR is widening its LEAP engine support © *CFM International*

Pem-Air has announced an expansion of its engine maintenance capabilities, adding support for the CFM International LEAP-engine family under a General Support Licence Agreement (GSLA) for the overhaul of LEAP-1A, LEAP-1B and LEAP-1C engines. Pem-Air Turbine Engine Services will now provide maintenance, repair, overhaul (MRO) and field support services for the LEAP-1A and LEAP-1B engines that power the latest-generation of single-aisle aircraft. This expansion reinforces Pem-Air's commitment to helping operators improve reliability, minimise downtime and optimise life-cycle operating costs.

The company's LEAP capabilities are centred on the two primary commercial variants. The LEAP-1A, the exclusive engine option for the Airbus A320neo family, is already supported by Pem-Air through selected MRO services, with capabilities actively being scaled towards a broader offering. Services include routine and advanced maintenance, targeted repair work and comprehensive on-wing support. Pem-Air's field service teams are available for rapid deployment to respond to aircraft-on-ground (AOG) events, enabling operators to return aircraft to service quickly and maintain operational continuity. The LEAP-1B, developed exclusively for the Boeing 737 MAX series, is optimised for aerodynamic integration and operational efficiency. Together, both engine variants deliver up to 15% improved fuel efficiency compared with previous-generation engines, directly supporting airlines' sustainability objectives and cost-reduction strategies.

WLFC and CFM launch CFM56 life-extension programme

Willis Lease Finance Corporation (WLFC) has announced the launch of an industry-first programme, developed in collaboration with CFM International (CFM), aimed at extending the operational life of CFM56-5B and CFM56-7B engines. The programme enables WLFC to keep CFM56-5B and CFM56-7B engines in service for longer by restoring core components, rather than fully dismantling the engine. WLFC is the first commercial aircraft engine lessor to partner with the OEM on an initiative of this kind for these engine types, underlining the company's commitment to extending engine lifecycles. "This programme represents a meaningful evolution in how we manage engine assets," said Austin C. Willis, Chief Executive Officer of Willis Lease Finance Corporation. "By using this programme to perform shop visits in our own facilities as well as others, we expect to offer our customers a high-quality product at a reasonable price." "With this agreement, WLFC will benefit from OEM material to support the servicing of its CFM56 engines," said Gaël Méheust, President and CEO of CFM International. "CFM56 engines have set standards for reliability and time on wing — benefits which this contract will extend well into the future for WLFC's customers." WLFC has already identified and inducted an initial group of engines into the programme and plans to expand participation across additional assets over time.

Saudia Group adopts Veryon Defect Analytics

Saudia Group has selected Veryon Defect Analysis as part of its wider drive to strengthen digital maintenance analytics across its passenger and cargo fleet. As the Group continues to expand its fleet and route network in line with the Kingdom's aviation strategy, it is investing in advanced analytical tools to complement existing maintenance systems and improve operational reliability and efficiency. With more than 160 aircraft operated across multiple business units, Saudia Group manages a complex maintenance environment requiring continuous data review and close coordination across technical teams. Veryon Defect Analysis applies artificial intelligence and natural language processing to group related defect reports and corrective actions across aircraft types, giving maintenance teams clearer visibility of recurring issues and emerging trends. Airlines already using defect analytics platforms have reported tangible gains in defect tracking efficiency, faster troubleshooting, and improved maintenance planning. Veryon Defect Analysis integrates with established maintenance and engineering systems, delivering near-real-time insights to support decision-making and optimise technical performance. The rollout will support maintenance and engineering teams across relevant Saudia Group entities.

LATAM expands AeroSHARK retrofit for entire B777-300ER fleet

LATAM Airlines Group, the first airline outside the Lufthansa Group to use AeroSHARK, has decided to expand the use of the drag-reduction technology developed jointly by Lufthansa Technik and BASF Coatings. The airline has extended its contract with Lufthansa Technik to include the delivery of five additional AeroSHARK shipsets. These will be used to retrofit the remaining aircraft in LATAM's fleet of ten Boeing 777-300ERs. By the end of 2025, five aircraft were already operating with AeroSHARK installed, and the final modification is expected to be completed in 2027. LATAM was among the earliest adopters of AeroSHARK. Its first aircraft was modified in December 2023 without public announcement in order to test the technology in real airline operations. After almost one year of day-to-day use, the aircraft confirmed the expected reduction of around one percent in fuel consumption and emissions. Following this validation, LATAM ordered four additional shipsets in 2024. AeroSHARK is a functional surface film that replicates the flow-optimised structure of sharkskin. It features small longitudinal protrusions measuring about 50 micrometres, so-called riblets, which are precisely aligned with the airflow. In the current expansion stage, these riblets cover almost the entire fuselage and engine nacelles of the Boeing 777, around 950 m^2 on its -300ER variant. Once LATAM's entire Boeing 777 fleet is modified in this way, the proven one per cent drag reduction will enable the airline to achieve annual savings of up to 4,000 metric tonnes of jet fuel and 12,000 metric tonnes of CO_2 emissions. This is equivalent to around 56 scheduled flights from São Paulo to Miami on a Boeing 777. With the new order, LATAM's total AeroSHARK purchase reaches ten shipsets, matching its full 777-300ER subfleet. Once all aircraft are modified in 2027, LATAM is expected to become the second airline worldwide to operate an entire subfleet equipped with AeroSHARK."

The AeroSHARK surface film is applied to a LATAM aircraft © *Lufthansa Technik*

Satair and Eaton strengthen USM distribution partnership in China

Satair, an Airbus Services company, and Eaton have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to further expand their collaboration in the distribution of Eaton used serviceable material (USM) across the China region. Building on the long-standing relationship between the two companies, the MoU marks the beginning of a new phase of cooperation focused on strengthening the USM market in China. Under the MoU, Satair and Eaton will work together to improve customer access to Eaton USM, with Satair positioned to become the distributor for Eaton USM in China. The scope includes key Eaton aerospace components, further enhancing Satair's aftermarket portfolio and widening the range of solutions available to customers in the region. By combining Eaton's OEM expertise with Satair's regional presence and distribution capabilities, the collaboration aims to support a more mature and accessible USM offering in China. The partnership is expected to provide customers with greater choice and flexibility when sourcing Eaton core products, while reinforcing confidence in the quality and reliability of USM solutions. This MoU represents the first formal step towards a dedicated USM-focused collaboration between Satair and Eaton. It also reflects a shared ambition to explore deeper cooperation opportunities in the future, building on the strong foundation already established between the two companies.

Satair and Eaton will further expand their collaboration with the signing of a new MoU © *Satair*

ATC FZE, GMF and AIR ONE Technics to cooperate on B747F maintenance

From left to right: Asep Mulyana - Sales & Marketing Group Head, GMF, Andi Fahrurrozi – CEO, GMF, and Ayrat Gilmutdinov, AIR ONE Technics

Aerotranscargo FZE (ATC FZE), Garuda Maintenance facility Aero Asia (GMF), and AIR ONE Technics (AOT) jointly announced a strategic partnership through an MoU signed in Dubai, outlining new Boeing 747 freighter maintenance cooperation for 2026/2027. The MoU establishes a framework for collaboration between the three parties, combining GMF's global MRO capabilities, ATC FZE's worldwide wide-body freighter operations, and AIR ONE Technics' technical expertise based at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Aerospace Hub. The cooperation will support the continued airworthiness and operational reliability of ATC FZE's Boeing 747 fleet, while strengthening technical collaboration across Indonesia, the Middle East and Europe. The MoU was signed by Guneet Mirchandani, Chairman of ATC FZE, Andi Fahrurrozi, Chief Executive Officer of GMF, and Ayrat Gilmutdinov, Chief Executive Officer of AOT. Aerotranscargo FZE and AIR ONE Technics are subsidiaries of AIR ONE International Holdings, a global network of cargo airlines and aviation companies offering flexible airfreight capacity through long-term charters, ACMI solutions and scheduled services. AIR ONE Technics is a UAE-based line maintenance and airworthiness management services provider supporting ATC FZE's fleet of eleven Boeing 747-400 freighters and two Boeing 777 freighters. Based at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Aerospace Hub, Dubai South, the company is rapidly expanding to support the Group's Boeing 747 and 777 freighter operations across the UAE, Europe and Asia. GMF is Indonesia's largest and most integrated aircraft MRO provider, with more than 76 years of experience serving over 190 customers in more than 70 countries. GMF is recognised by major aviation authorities worldwide and holds more than 30 safety and airworthiness certifications, including approvals from the FAA (United States), EASA (Europe), CAA UK (United Kingdom), CASA (Australia), and DGCA (Indonesia).

Start-up carrier Sun PhuQuoc Airways signs contract with AJW

AJW Group has signed a new power-by-the-hour (PBH) and main base kit (MBK) support agreement with Sun PhuQuoc Airways, a newly launched airline based in Vietnam. The agreement will provide comprehensive component and inventory support as the carrier enters service and begins to scale its operations. Sun PhuQuoc Airways is a start-up airline partly owned by Sun Group, a well-established luxury hospitality brand with a strong presence in Vietnam and across Asia. Headquartered in Vietnam, the airline currently operates a fleet of Airbus A321 aircraft, including both A321ceo and A321neo variants. Initial operations focus on domestic services linking the island of PhuQuoc with key Vietnamese hubs, including Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi Noi Bai International Airport and Da Nang. Looking ahead, Sun PhuQuoc Airways has outlined plans to expand its route network beyond Vietnam, with international services to South Korea and Taiwan targeted to commence from 2026. This expansion strategy is underpinned by the financial strength and strategic expertise of Sun Group, positioning the airline for rapid and sustainable growth in the regional market. Under the terms of the agreement, AJW Group will deliver PBH and MBK support for Sun PhuQuoc's current fleet of six aircraft, comprising two A321ceos and four A321neos. The tailored support package is designed to ensure high levels of aircraft availability and operational reliability while enabling the airline to manage costs effectively during its start-up phase. The request for proposal (RFP) process began in July 2025, with teams from AJW Group and Sun PhuQuoc Airways working closely to develop a solution aligned with the airline's operational profile and long-term growth ambitions. The resulting agreement reflects a collaborative approach and is intended to support Sun PhuQuoc as it accelerates fleet and network expansion in the years ahead.

AJW Group will deliver PBH and MBK support for Sun PhuQuoc's current fleet of six A321 aircraft © *AJW Group*

Cathay selects Thales for new A330neo fleet avionics

The Cathay Group has selected Thales to provide a comprehensive suite of advanced avionics systems for its upcoming fleet expansion, covering 30 Airbus A330neo aircraft to be operated by Cathay Pacific and 18 A321neo/A320neo aircraft to be flown by HK Express. The agreement strengthens Thales' position as a key technology partner for the Hong Kong-based airline group and reflects a continued focus on equipping new aircraft with modern, future-ready cockpit solutions. Under the deal, both airlines will benefit from Airbus' latest-generation Flight Management System (FMS), based on Thales' PureFlyt FMS. The system is designed to improve flight efficiency through highly accurate trajectory computation, an intuitive pilot interface and enhanced operational reliability. Thales highlights that the PureFlyt FMS can support more optimised flight planning and execution, helping airlines reduce pilot workload, minimise airspace congestion and lower fuel consumption. A notable feature is its dedicated DIRECT TO page, which displays only the most relevant information for pilots, supporting quicker decision-making in dynamic flight conditions. The aircraft will also be equipped with Thales' 5G-Immune Low-Range Radio Altimeter (LRRA), designed to enhance flight safety and ensure resilience against potential interference from 5G networks. In addition, the fleet will feature the integrated T3CAS traffic collision avoidance system from ACSS, providing advanced alerting functions to improve situational awareness and strengthen safety margins during flight operations. Further enhancing cockpit capability, Thales will supply a Head-Up Display (HUD), allowing pilots to access critical flight data while keeping their eyes focused outside the cockpit, supporting safer operations during approach, landing and low-visibility conditions. Cathay Pacific will also install Thales' AVIATOR S cockpit satellite communications system on its A330neo aircraft, providing high-speed and reliable connectivity to improve communications, operational responsiveness and overall flight efficiency.

Liebherr and Röder strengthen E-Jet landing gear support

Liebherr-Aerospace and Röder Präzision, based in Egelsbach, Germany, are expanding their cooperation to enhance maintenance support for the Embraer E-Jet E1 programme. Under the intensified partnership, Röder will now overhaul structural components of the main landing gear, building on its existing role in overhauling parts of the nose landing gear for the same aircraft family. To support Liebherr-Aerospace's growing requirements, Röder has invested in a major expansion of its machinery and additional training for its highly specialised workforce. The overhaul programme for structural components is set to increase progressively from 2026 onwards. The partnership will see key processes such as disassembly, assembly, testing and certification of the landing gear systems carried out at Liebherr's facility in Lindenberg. Meanwhile, individual component overhauls will be performed at Röder's site in Egelsbach. Bastian Heberer, CEO of the Röder Group, said the continued development of the cooperation reflects a long-standing relationship built on trust. He added that Röder's targeted investments in equipment and ongoing employee qualification will further strengthen its contribution as a reliable MRO partner, supporting Liebherr in delivering stable capacity, high quality standards and short turnaround times for Embraer E-Jet E1 operators. Liebherr-Aerospace Lindenberg remains the original equipment manufacturer for the landing gear systems of the Embraer E1 generation of E-Jets, supported by its established supply chain.

Röder will overhaul structural components of the E-Jet E1 main landing gear © *Röder*

Satair and GAMECO expanding partnership into USM segment

Satair and GAMECO signing the MoU to enhance strategic cooperation into the USM segment © *Satair*

Satair and Guangzhou Aircraft Maintenance Engineering (GAMECO) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their long-standing strategic cooperation by expanding into the used serviceable material (USM) segment. The agreement marks a new phase in a relationship that has developed over several decades, reflecting a shared commitment to supporting the evolving needs of the aviation aftermarket. The MoU establishes a framework for closer collaboration in USM parts and services, with a particular focus on USM repair management and the pursuit of new market opportunities. By combining Satair's global distribution capabilities with GAMECO's extensive maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) expertise, the partnership aims to deliver more flexible, reliable and cost-effective material solutions for customers. A key objective of the cooperation is to reduce dependence on newly manufactured parts by promoting repair, reuse and improved availability of high-quality used components. This approach not only supports cost efficiency for airlines and operators but also contributes to greater sustainability across the aviation supply chain. Under the terms of the non-exclusive agreement, Satair and GAMECO will collaborate on repair management and market development initiatives, helping to strengthen the regional and global aviation supply chain while supporting more efficient and sustainable operations.

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BlueFive Capital launches aircraft leasing platform

BlueFive Capital has announced the launch of BlueFive Leasing, a new aircraft leasing and asset management business based in Muscat, Oman. The initiative is positioned as one of the first dedicated aircraft leasing asset management platforms in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), representing a notable step forward for the region's aviation finance sector. BlueFive Leasing aims to take advantage of strong and sustained growth in air travel across the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The platform will focus on leasing both narrow-body and wide-body aircraft across the full age spectrum and throughout the market cycle, serving a global customer base of established airlines. By offering a new source of aviation capital from the GCC, the business intends to provide airlines with competitive leasing solutions while giving investment partners access to a scalable, institutionally governed product designed to deliver attractive risk-adjusted returns. The platform has been established through a strategic partnership between BlueFive Capital and an Omani sovereign institution. As part of its launch programme, BlueFive Leasing will begin fundraising for its first investment vehicle, BlueFive Wings Fund I. The fund is targeting more than US$1.0 billion in commitments to invest in commercial aircraft assets. Hazem Ben-Gacem, Founder and Chief Executive of BlueFive Capital, said the creation of BlueFive Leasing reflects a broader strategic ambition to diversify regional investment portfolios and strengthen the GCC's participation in the global aviation value chain. He added that the platform's capital base and experienced management team will enable it to navigate aviation market cycles and capture opportunities as they emerge. The launch follows six months after BlueFive Capital opened its Muscat office, underlining Oman's growing appetite for new investment products that can strengthen domestic portfolios while attracting international capital.

Jazz Aviation renews Veryon partnership for fleet diagnostics

Veryon, the provider of software solutions for the aviation industry, has announced an expanded partnership with Jazz Aviation. The agreement broadens Jazz's use of Veryon's platform and incorporates Veryon Guided Troubleshooting, a solution developed in collaboration with De Havilland, supporting a comprehensive fleet-wide diagnostics strategy. Jazz Aviation has long relied on Veryon Defect Analysis and Veryon Reliability. As the airline planned the next phase of its reliability programme, Veryon collaborated closely with Jazz Aviation to highlight the benefits of a more integrated diagnostics approach across its complex operations. Veryon's expertise in AI-driven maintenance solutions is built on decades of aviation data, extensive industry knowledge, and analytics designed specifically for maintenance and engineering teams. By integrating structured defect data, historical maintenance records, and intelligent diagnostics, Veryon enables operators to move from reactive troubleshooting to proactive, fleet-wide insight. Through on-site collaboration, product demonstrations, and strategic planning sessions, Jazz Aviation gained a clearer understanding of recent improvements to Veryon Reliability and how Veryon Guided Troubleshooting enhances repair effectiveness and accuracy across the fleet. The airline has also joined Veryon's Customer Advisory Board, offering operational insights to help inform the future development of Veryon Guided Troubleshooting.

ST Engineering launches integrated airframe and nacelle MRO hub

Aircraft operators can now benefit from greater convenience and improved operational efficiency through a newly integrated airframe and nacelle maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) service centre operated by ST Engineering's Commercial Aerospace business in Singapore. In a first for the company's global MRO network, this facility brings together both airframe and nacelle maintenance capabilities within its existing airframe MRO infrastructure. By offering these services under one roof, the centre reduces operational complexity for airlines and leasing companies, while also shortening turnaround times and ensuring consistent technical standards across the full maintenance work scope. Operators of supported aircraft platforms can now consolidate scheduled and unscheduled airframe and nacelle maintenance seamlessly at this dual-service hub. The facility is equipped with advanced tooling and employs OEM-approved processes, enabling high-quality repairs and overhaul work that aligns with industry requirements and manufacturer standards. Jeffrey Lam, President of Commercial Aerospace at ST Engineering, highlighted that the Singapore integrated centre strengthens the group's global network and provides customers with greater flexibility when selecting an MRO location that best supports their operational needs. He noted that by streamlining communications, maintenance scheduling and work scope management, ST Engineering is delivering a true one-stop experience, allowing customers to focus on flying and growing their business rather than managing multiple maintenance providers. Its nacelle MRO programmes hold certifications from multiple aviation authorities and are approved by major OEMs including Boeing, Airbus, Safran and Collins Aerospace. This positions ST Engineering to deliver OEM-aligned repairs and comprehensive maintenance solutions to a broad global customer base.

GE Aerospace commits US$300m to Singapore engine repair expansion

GE Aerospace has unveiled a major multi-year investment plan of up to US$300 million to significantly expand and modernise its aircraft engine repair operations in Singapore. Backed by the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB), the initiative is designed to transform the company's local maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) capabilities, strengthening Singapore's position as a key global aviation hub. Running over five years from 2025 to 2029, the programme will focus on accelerating turnaround times for engine repairs while improving digital connectivity and delivering a smoother, more integrated service experience for airline customers. Central to the expansion will be the introduction of advanced automation, digitisation, and AI-enabled inspection technologies, enabling faster and more reliable repair workflows. Mohamed Ali, President and CEO of Commercial Engines & Services at GE Aerospace, highlighted the long-standing partnership with the EDB and the strategic importance of the new commitment. He described the investment as a step towards breakthrough capabilities that will raise the standard of engine repair services and help keep customers flying with greater efficiency. With predictive maintenance tools and automated digital inspections, repairs are expected to become more consistent in both time and cost, improving safety outcomes, durability, fuel efficiency, and overall operating expenses for airlines. In addition, GE Aerospace and the EDB have signed a memorandum of understanding, signalling their intent to explore further development of advanced repair technologies and capabilities in Singapore.

Signing of the new investment plan between GE Aerospace and EDB © *GE Aerospace*

APS Malaysia gains key ATR propeller certifications

Aircraft Propeller Services' facility in Subang © *APS*

The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) and the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) have certified Aircraft Propeller Services' (APS) maintenance centre in Subang to maintain, repair and overhaul propellers used on ATR turboprop aircraft. The facility has also achieved AS9100 certification, the internationally recognised quality management standard for the aerospace industry. This approval means ATR operators in Nepal and the Philippines can now send their Collins Aerospace 568F propeller systems to APS Malaysia for MRO services. Previously, these components had to be shipped outside the region. "Airlines in Nepal and the Philippines previously had to send their propellers to North America or Europe for repairs and overhaul. Keeping the propellers within the region by using our Malaysia facility reduces turnaround times, simplifies logistics and improves fleet availability," said Fergus Lopez, Managing Director of APS Asia Pacific. APS Malaysia is currently the only MRO organisation in Asia Pacific licensed by the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) to service 568F propeller systems, using OEM-approved processes and materials. The company is already certified by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia (CAAM). "The certifications from CAAP and CAAN are significant, as both countries operate large ATR fleets. Together with our AS9100 certification, these regulatory validations reinforce APS Malaysia as a trusted regional hub for propeller and component MRO," Lopez added.

Virgin Australia adopts Embraer's AHEAD system

Embraer has signed an agreement with Virgin Australia to equip the airline's E2 fleet with the AHEAD (Aircraft Health Analysis and Diagnosis) system. The solution enables airlines to implement digital predictive maintenance across their E-Jet fleets, using data to identify and anticipate potential issues before they become critical. AHEAD provides real-time monitoring of key aircraft systems, including the auxiliary power unit (APU), fuel, pneumatics, hydraulics, avionics, engines, navigation, air conditioning and flight controls. The platform collects data both in-flight and, on the ground, applying analytics and predictive algorithms to support proactive maintenance. These capabilities help operators reduce unscheduled downtime, optimise fleet availability, and lower operational costs and CO_2 emissions by eliminating avoidable fuel burn linked to maintenance-related issues. "Our E2 jets are a game changer, delivering a more reliable, efficient and comfortable experience for our customers," said Nathan Miller, Executive General Manager at Virgin Australia Regional Airlines. "The AHEAD tool will help us stay ahead of maintenance issues, ensuring we are getting the very best out of our new aircraft and strengthening operational performance across our network." Virgin Australia has eight firm orders for E2 jets and has already taken delivery of two aircraft. The airline's E190-E2 fleet is based in Perth and operated by Virgin Australia Regional Airlines (VARA).

Virgin Australia will adopt Embraer's AHEAD predictive maintenance system for its E2 fleet © *Embraer*

Safran and JAL ink new SBH contract for JAL's A350 fleet

Safran and JAL have inked an SBH contract for the carrier's fleet of A350 aircraft © *Airbus*

Japan Airlines (JAL) and Safran have signed a comprehensive nine-year "Support by the Hour" (SBH) contract covering up to 35 Airbus A350-900 and A350-1000 aircraft. Services began on January 1, 2026. The agreement is a first of its kind, bringing together four Safran companies — Safran Landing Systems, Safran Electronics & Defense, Safran Electrical & Power, and Safran Ventilation Systems — under a single contract to provide a complete turnkey support solution for Japan Airlines' Airbus A350 fleet. Under the SBH arrangement, Safran will deliver a full spectrum of tailored services, including maintenance, repair, component pooling, logistics management, and dedicated local support in Tokyo. Safran will also oversee on-site logistics and transportation, ensuring components are collected and returned to JAL's facilities by a dedicated local team. By leveraging real-time data, advanced analytics and digital integration, the programme will help anticipate maintenance requirements, improve component availability and reduce unscheduled events. This will maximise reliability and ensure JAL's A350 fleet continues operating at peak performance. "We are pleased to have concluded an agreement with Safran regarding parts maintenance for the A350," said Kyohei Takizawa, Vice President, Aircraft and Engineering Procurement at Japan Airlines. "The A350 is one of our main aircraft, and ensuring its on-time performance remains a major challenge. Through this agreement, we will strengthen the partnership between JAL and Safran, support the A350's punctual operation and aircraft quality, and provide better services to our passengers."

Collins extends FlightSense support for SIA's B777 fleet

Collins Aerospace has extended the FlightSense contract for SIA's B777 fleet © *AirTeamImages*

Collins Aerospace has signed an agreement to extend its FlightSense services with Singapore Airlines (SIA) for the carrier's Boeing 777 fleet. The new deal adds a further five years of coverage and will support a total of 27 aircraft, including five Boeing 777F freighters newly added to the programme. Collins Aerospace has partnered with SIA through the FlightSense service since 2008. This latest extension reinforces Collins' ability to provide reliable and cost-effective maintenance support solutions for the airline's Boeing 777 operations. "Collins Aerospace has supported Singapore Airlines over the long term, demonstrating a consistent focus on trust, innovation and reliability," said Ryan Hudson, Vice President of Aftermarket for Collins Aerospace's Power & Controls unit. "This ongoing commitment highlights our dedication to delivering tailored service solutions that enhance operational efficiency and performance, while evolving to meet the changing needs of the industry." FlightSense is a full lifecycle maintenance support programme designed to meet airlines' specific operational requirements and improve overall performance. It integrates Collins' Ascentia® platform, using advanced prognostics and health management software to deliver customisable levels of support.

SkyAlyne selects IFS to deliver digital maintenance platform

IFS is to deliver a fully digital aviation maintenance and asset management platform for the RCAF's FAcT programme © *IFS*

IFS has been selected by SkyAlyne to deliver a fully digital aviation maintenance and asset management platform for the Royal Canadian Air Force's Future Aircrew Training (FAcT) programme. SkyAlyne, the prime contractor for the initiative, will deploy IFS Cloud for aviation maintenance in support of the Canadian Department of National Defence's major new training system. The collaboration represents an important step in the modernisation of Canada's military pilot and aircrew training framework. By implementing IFS Cloud, SkyAlyne will gain advanced digital tools to streamline fleet maintenance operations, strengthen airworthiness management, and maximise aircraft availability across its nationwide training bases. Aircraft readiness is central to the success of the FAcT programme, a 25-year partnership designed to prepare the next generation of Royal Canadian Air Force pilots and aircrew with world-class operational skills. Through real-time visibility into maintenance activities, resource planning and compliance monitoring, the platform is expected to reduce downtime, improve efficiency, and ensure consistently high levels of training readiness. Awarded to SkyAlyne in 2024, the FAcT programme introduces a next-generation approach to military flight training. It brings together leading Canadian aviation, defence and training organisations under a single modernised structure. SkyAlyne's team of experts in aviation, simulation, defence support and training delivery is working closely with the RCAF to build a completely new training ecosystem from the ground up. This includes introducing new aircraft, digital technologies and innovative learning methods across multiple bases. The programme covers the full design and implementation of training and in-service support required to prepare Pilots, Air Combat Systems Officers and Airborne Electronic Sensor Operators for future RCAF missions. It will include new curricula, digital courseware and supporting infrastructure, underpinned by modern adult learning and simulation techniques. SkyAlyne's training fleet will feature a wide range of aircraft, including the Grob G 120TP, Pilatus PC-21, Airbus H135, Beechcraft King Air 260 and De Havilland Canada Dash 8-400, selected to meet Canada's evolving defence and operational training needs.

Volotea implements EXSYN's predictive spare parts planning © *Volotea*

EXSYN Aviation Solutions (EXSYN) has announced the deployment of its predictive spare parts planning capability at **Volotea**, enhancing the airline's ability to forecast material demand months and even years in advance. Built on EXSYN's modular aviation data platform, the solution is set to transform the way Volotea plans, procures and positions spare parts across its maintenance network. Developed in close collaboration between EXSYN and Volotea, the new capability leverages the company's long-term forecasting functionality to combine data from the airline's maintenance programme with historical unscheduled maintenance events. This integrated approach enables Volotea to allocate materials more strategically, optimise procurement cycles and reduce unplanned AOG exposure across multiple bases. "Data-driven material planning is a key enabler for efficient and resilient maintenance operations," commented Sander de Bree, CEO of EXSYN. "Working together with Volotea, we've connected forecasting intelligence directly to logistics workflows, turning trusted operational data into tangible cost and reliability gains." The capability introduces a long-term, data-driven approach to material forecasting, reshaping how airlines plan and manage spare parts throughout their maintenance operations. The initiative is expected to improve forecasting accuracy and significantly reduce annual spare parts purchasing costs by minimising AOG-related surcharges and enabling more efficient material allocation. Volotea will use the Long-Term Forecasting capability to anticipate material requirements based on maintenance patterns and fleet utilisation. These insights feed directly into EXSYN's Logistics & Supply Chain application, which manages stock positions and part movements between maintenance locations, ensuring that critical components are available ahead of demand.

DAE posts 21% revenue increase for 2025

Dubai Aerospace Enterprise (DAE) has announced its financial results for the year ended December 31, 2025, delivering strong growth in revenue, profitability and overall asset base. Total revenue reached US$1,725.2 million in 2025, up from US$1,429.6 million in 2024. This represents an increase of US$295.6 million, or 20.7%. The rise was primarily driven by higher lease income linked to aircraft acquired through business combinations and other channels, alongside increased maintenance revenue during the year. DAE also reported profit of US$702.2 million for 2025, compared with US$477.5 million the previous year. This marks a substantial increase of US$224.7 million, or 47.1%. The improvement was largely attributed to stronger operating performance and insurance recoveries, partly offset by higher net finance costs and an increased income tax expense. Operating profit before exceptional items rose to US$922.6 million, up from US$711.1 million in 2024. The increase of US$211.5 million, or 29.7%, reflects the company's higher revenue base and gains on aircraft disposals, although this was partially balanced by an overall rise in total expenses. Total assets grew significantly to US$16,547.7 million at the end of 2025, compared with US$13,033.3 million at the end of 2024. This expansion was mainly due to aircraft acquisitions completed during the year, including those obtained through business combinations. Available liquidity stood at US$3,400.2 million December 31, 2025, down from US$3,785.6 million a year earlier. However, the liquidity coverage ratio improved slightly to 277%, compared with 274% in 2024. The company's net debt-to-equity ratio increased to 2.58:1 times, compared with 2.42:1 times at the end of the previous year.

ANA selects AMOS to transform global maintenance operations

All Nippon Airways (ANA) has selected AMOS, the maintenance and engineering solution from Swiss AviationSoftware (Swiss-AS), to modernise and standardise its global maintenance operations. The implementation project officially began in early December 2025, with go-live planned for Q1 2028. AMOS will support more than 250 aircraft and over 5,000 users across ANA's maintenance and engineering organisation. The solution includes AMOS core functionality as well as AMOSmobile/EXEC, AMOSmobile/STORES and AMOS CROM, delivering a fully integrated digital environment from planning and execution through to materials and component management. With AMOS, ANA will consolidate and replace a landscape of multiple legacy maintenance systems. Centralised data management, real-time visibility, and advanced planning and optimisation capabilities will strengthen operational reliability, efficiency, and safety across the fleet. The programme also lays the groundwork for predictive and data-driven maintenance strategies. As part of this transformation, ANA has taken a strategic decision to move away from heavily customised IT systems. Instead, the airline is aligning and enhancing its internal maintenance and engineering processes to match AMOS as a global industry standard. By the end of the definition phase, more than 1,000 engineering and maintenance processes — around 70 percent of the total — will be adapted. Fewer than five percent of these processes will require system customisation by Swiss-AS. This approach supports ANA's objective of optimising maintenance processes in line with international best practices, improving efficiency, and establishing a scalable foundation for future innovation.


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Passenger-to-freighter conversions

What's driving the demand today and will it last, or will brand-new freighter variants of commercial aircraft families become the go-to option?

By David Dundas

From the very early days of aviation, conversion of aircraft for freight use has existed. As an example, in 1919, the American Railway Express attempted to fly 1,100 pounds of freight from Chicago to Washington, D.C. using a converted bomber. However, it was after the end of the Second World War that such conversions gathered pace when a massive surplus of military aircraft like the Douglas C-47 (the military version of DC-3) and C-54s were converted into commercial freighters to fill the need for cargo capacity. Conversions continued for the subsequent decades, with a demand for air freight increasing as a direct result of eCommerce. This was particularly noticeable when the Covid-19 pandemic struck in 2020 when larger aircraft were placed on the conversion 'menu', including the Boeing 777-300ER and Airbus A321.

In order to find out more about the current state of the market for freighter conversions and the hurdles faced, we approached both Aeronautical Engineers Inc. and the Vallair Group to get their invaluable take on things.

What structural changes in global air cargo demand have made passenger-to-freighter conversions increasingly attractive in recent years?

There are several ways of looking at this, as the situation differs between narrow-bodies and wide-bodies. Pascal Parant, Chief Commercial & Marketing Officer at Vallair Group breaks it down as follows: "In the current narrow-body market, lessors and operators have a strong interest in keeping aircraft in passenger configuration. Demand remains extremely high due to persistent supply chain disruptions, engine reliability issues on CEOs, strong passenger demand, and comparatively weaker cargo demand. Several A321 and 737-800 P2F aircraft are currently grounded. In some cases, leasing the engines alone can generate more revenue than leasing the entire aircraft. Narrow-body cargo demand is also softened by highly efficient logistics networks based on road and trucking — one only needs to look at the number of Amazon trucks on highways. On the wide-body side, apart from the 777F, there are currently no immediate new-production solutions available. This will change with the arrival of the A350F, although engine reliability will remain an important question. Demand driven by e-commerce and long-haul international cargo remains solid. Wide-body freighters are not readily available on the market and prices are extremely high. As a result, whatever can be converted will be — primarily 777-300ERs and A330s. Demand exists, capital is available, but suitable conversion candidates are increasingly difficult to find." Beyond the above, Robert T. Convey, SVP Sales & Marketing, Aeronautical Engineers Inc. (AEI), feels that "Perhaps the largest structural change that affected the narrow-

Robert T. Convey, SVP Sales & Marketing, Aeronautical Engineers Inc

> **"Perhaps the largest structural change that affected the narrow-body conversion space in recent years was COVID. This had the dual effect of grounding passenger aircraft while at the same time increasing demand for regional freight. With COVID now well behind us we are seeing the effects of oversupply and a softening of narrow-body conversion demand."**
>
> *Robert T. Convey, SVP Sales & Marketing, Aeronautical Engineers Inc*

body conversion space in recent years was COVID. This had the dual effect of grounding passenger aircraft while at the same time increasing demand for regional freight. With COVID now well behind us we are seeing the effects of oversupply and a softening of narrow-body conversion demand."

How do you see the long-term role of converted freighters versus new-build freighters in the global cargo fleet?

Here Robert Convey makes it clear that "AEI focuses exclusively on narrow-body freighters for which there are no OEM new build options. The primary reason for this is the low utilisation of the narrow-body freighter which does not support the high cost of a new build freighter," while Pascal Parant doesn't mince words when tells us that: "There are simply not enough new-build freighters being produced to meet demand, and lease rates are extremely high — above US$1.2 million per month for a 777F. Consequently, converted freighters will continue to play a major role for many years. The main risk factor is potential CO_2 taxation affecting older aircraft types."

What criteria determine whether a specific aircraft type is a good candidate for P2F conversion?

It is fair to say that key factors include age, remaining time before entering ageing programmes, fuel efficiency, and most importantly payload-range capability. The lighter the aircraft, the greater the payload and operational efficiency. Conversion programme maturity and slot availability are also critical. Pascal Parant goes on to say that "For narrow-bodies, the market is saturated and limited — the 737 and A321 remain the only realistic options. However, demand is not fully there yet. The day a major operator selects the A321P2F as a true 757 replacement, the market dynamic will change significantly. Until then, the narrow-body cargo market will remain relatively soft. For wide-bodies, the A330 is currently the 'flavour of the year.' The next milestone will be the certification of the 777-300ER P2F. Availability of suitable feedstock will again be the limiting factor, as the 777X is not yet certified and airlines are retaining their passenger aircraft until they gain confidence in transitioning to newer types." Robert Convey makes one clear identifier when he tells us: "The primary driving feature of feedstock for a narrow-body freighter is its ability to carry a standard 88" x 125" container/pallet. These Unit Load Devices or ULD's are used around the world and if your proposed aircraft type is not able to transport these ULD's it will have limited success in the market. Of course price, availability and serviceability come into play when selecting an aircraft to convert but I would suggest the aforementioned is more important."

What role do lessors play in shaping conversion programmes and launch decisions?

According to Pascal Parant, "It largely depends on the lessor's profile. Some are active in P2F programmes, while others prefer to monetise their assets at lease expiration and leave cargo conversion to specialists. In my view, GECAS was

instrumental in the launch of the 777-300ER P2F programme. Today, AerCap continues to play a major role. Conversion allows full utilisation of the aircraft's remaining economic life, but long-term return on investment must be secured." Meanwhile, Robert Convey is very succinct in his answer as he advises that: "Historically narrow-body freighter have been converted equally between operators and lessors. Both sectors are needed to ensure the success of a conversion programme."

From an engineering perspective, what are the most complex aspects of converting a passenger aircraft into a freighter?

For Robert Convey at Aeronautical Engineers Inc. there is only one major challenge as he suggests that "Without a doubt the design and installation of the cargo door and accompanying surround structure presents engineers with the most challenges. It is critical that these components are designed properly and with durability in mind." Pascal Parant at Vallair Group is very much in agreement with Convey in terms of the cargo door, but he identifies two additional challenges as he tells us that: "It essentially comes down to three main elements: the cargo door, reinforced floor structure, and PDUs (Power Drive Units). Cargo loads are fundamentally different from passenger loads. Pressure forces on the cargo door are enormous, and all structural and load-distribution aspects must be carefully engineered." He then adds that "These conversions are true engineering achievements."

What lessons have you learned from early conversion programmes that have influenced your current designs?

As far as Robert Convey is concerned, "AEI's philosophy of continual improvement means that we are always bettering our current products. These improvements are then incorporated into the next generation of freighter which ensures our customers that the best solutions are always front and centre. Specific improvements include Cargo Door Sequencing valves, LED lights in on the main deck, new floor beams and the latest in smoke detector technology." Pascal Parant, on the other hand, adopts a cautionary approach when advising that: "The most important lesson is to conduct thorough due diligence when selecting engineering partners. A poor choice can bring a programme to its knees."

How does the total cost of ownership of a converted freighter compare with that of a new-build freighter?

Pascal Parant certainly makes it clear that a newly built fit-for-purpose freighter is almost a different beast as "A new-build freighter provides warranties, zero-time status at delivery, and proven maturity — particularly in the case of the 777F. The acquisition price is high, but the aircraft can operate for more than 30 years. For converted aircraft, total cost includes acquisition, heavy maintenance, and conversion. The main risk is airframe ageing. Older aircraft are more exposed to corrosion, and entry into ageing programmes can add approximately US$1.5–3 million on narrow-bodies." Both Pascal Parant and Robert Convey are in agreement that narrow-body freighters also typically fly fewer hours than passenger aircraft, and while Parant sees this resulting in lower maintenance reserve accumulation, Convey feels that this doesn't support the purchase of a new-build, narrow-body freighter.

What are the main bottlenecks in scaling up P2F conversion capacity today?

For Pascal Parant, the principal problem is getting all relevant factors to align, both with narrow-body and wide-body conversions. As he makes very clear, "It is rare that the three key factors align simultaneously: availability of suitable feedstock, conversion slots, and a strong cargo market. For narrow-bodies: limited suitable aircraft, available slots, but a softer cargo market. For wide-bodies: shortage of suitable aircraft, available slots, and a strong cargo market. China's performance in A330 conversions is remarkable — they have the scale, resources, and workforce. In the Western world, the shortage of skilled technicians is likely the biggest constraint." Beyond this, Robert Convey sees three additional areas where there are holdups and shortages: "Supply chain delays, escalating costs and a grave labour shortage are equal challenges when trying to scale a P2F programme."

Which aircraft types do you believe will dominate the P2F market over the next 10–15 years?

We decided to end this article with a relatively straightforward question, and we received two very straightforward answers in return. "In our sector the B737-800SF will hands down be the leading narrowbody freighter around the world," Robert Convey confirms, while Pascal Parant has his eye on three different aircraft, telling us that: "A330s and 777-300ERFs will dominate, and I remain convinced that the A321 will soon find its market — it is only a matter of time, perhaps within the next two years."

> **"It essentially comes down to three main elements: the cargo door, reinforced floor structure, and PDUs (Power Drive Units). Cargo loads are fundamentally different from passenger loads. Pressure forces on the cargo door are enormous, and all structural and load-distribution aspects must be carefully engineered."**
>
> *Pascal Parant, Chief Commercial & Marketing Officer, Vallair Group*

Pascal Parant, Chief Commercial & Marketing Officer, Vallair Group


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Cracking the Code on Aviation's Broken Supply Chain

How SkySelect is unlocking the value of AI for over 30 airlines and MROs.

When the founders of SkySelect first examined how airlines and MROs purchase aircraft parts, they were stunned. "It's like the 90s—paper, fax, phone calls, and emails," recalls Tulika Dayal, Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer at SkySelect. Here was an industry that had mastered the art of safely flying billions of passengers around the globe, yet its legacy procurement operations remained mired in manual processes that hadn't changed fundamentally in decades.

That observation became the genesis of SkySelect. Founded in 2017 in San Francisco and backed by leading investors including Bain Capital Ventures, Lux Capital, and RockCreek, the company set out to build what the aviation industry desperately needed. SkySelect is not just another marketplace or listing service; it uses AI with scale and precision in MRO procurement and the supply chain to enhance productivity, achieve savings, and improve supply chain visibility.

Eight years and over $6 billion in processed transactions later, SkySelect has proven that digitization isn't just possible in aviation procurement—it's transformative. And the timing couldn't be more critical: according to IATA and Oliver Wyman, supply chain bottlenecks cost the airline industry over $11 billion in 2025 alone.

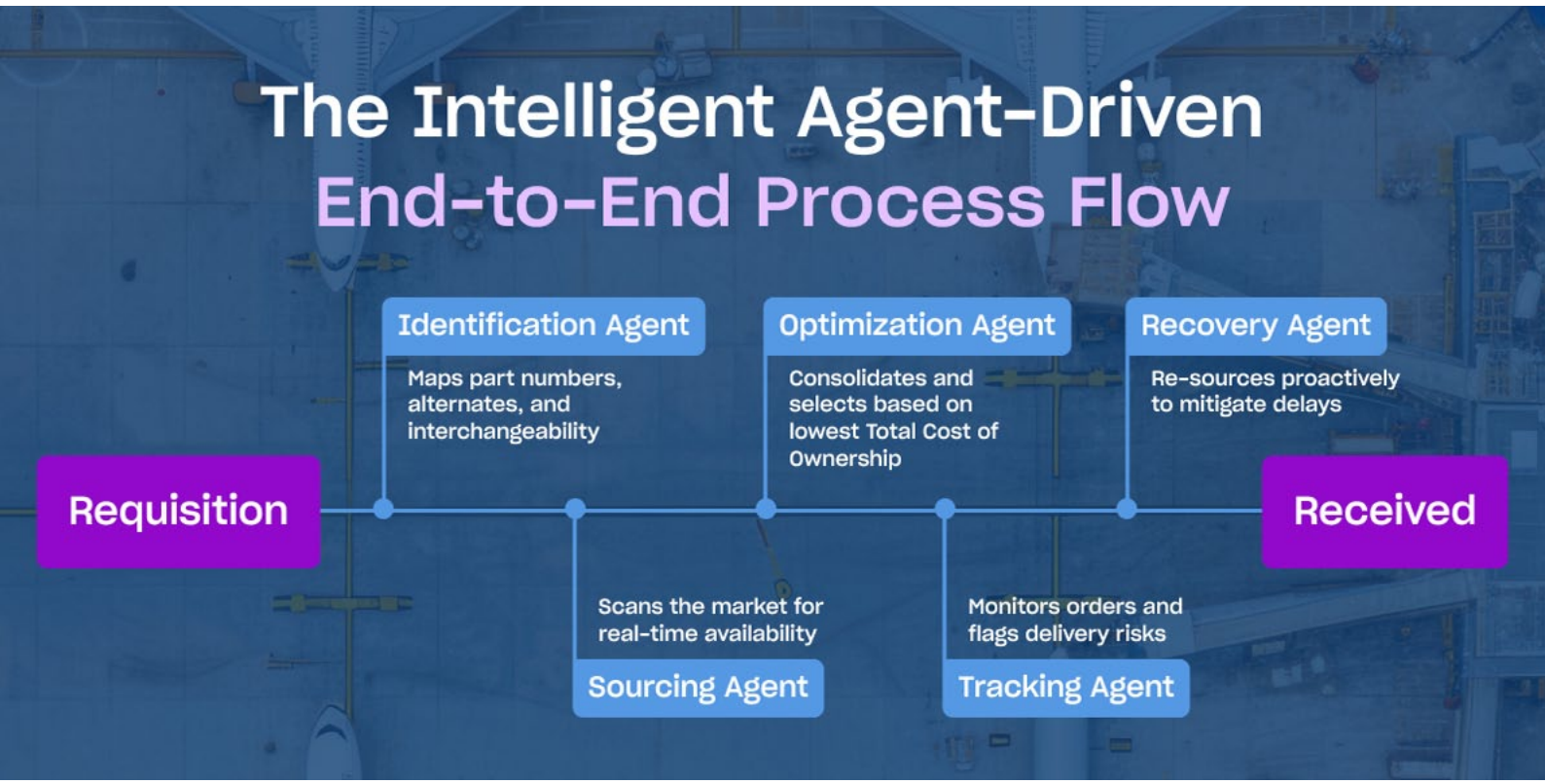
From Visibility to Action

The aviation aftermarket has no shortage of platforms that show you where parts might be available. The problem? Visibility alone doesn't capture savings. It doesn't eliminate manual work. It doesn't reduce lead times or prevent delays. It simply moves the same phone calls and emails to a different screen. In fact, listing services can overwhelm users with data and cloud their decision-making.

"We're not a marketplace or listing service—that's critical to understand," explains Erkki Brakmann, CEO at SkySelect. "Our AI doesn't just connect buyers and suppliers; it analyzes requirements, evaluates options based on availability, location, condition, price, and interchangeability, and makes purchasing decisions in real time across thousands of parts simultaneously. It monitors deliveries and flags potential risks. It captures the savings that visibility alone can't."

The distinction is more than philosophical—it shows up in the numbers. With a typical customer, SkySelect automates up to 70% of purchasing and captures up to 20% in price savings from day one. Customers report efficiency gains of up to 5x and a 20% improvement in on-time delivery.

> ***"SkySelect is quintessential because they've taken a rigorous and manual approach to parts purchasing and not only streamlined it into user-friendly software but coupled it with unrivaled high-touch customer service. SkySelect is saving us time, money, and capturing previously unforeseen opportunities."***
>
> *Paulo Baracat, Sourcing & Procurement Director, TAP Air Portugal*



The Rise of Agentic Procurement

"The industry doesn't just need software anymore; it needs a digital workforce," says Erkki Brakmann. This philosophy is reflected in their approach, which utilizes autonomous AI agents that not only support material buyers and Procurement & TechOps leaders but also actively perform tasks on their behalf.

SkySelect's AI agents cover the entire procurement workflow—part identification and interchangeability analysis, real-time sourcing across the market, purchase optimization based on the lowest Total Cost of Ownership, proactive order follow-up, and re-sourcing for delay management. The platform acts as an extension of the purchasing team, constantly scanning the market, matching demand with supply, and predicting shortages before they ground an aircraft.

"After the first week working with SkySelect, I could process 3-4 times as many part requirements as before. We've significantly boosted our productivity by automating low-dollar, high-volume part transactions and focusing our time and effort on high-value tasks. We are a small team in comparison to our fleet size of nearly 300 aircraft, so SkySelect's Procurement AI has been crucial to scaling our operations."

Nicole Mena, Buyer at JetBlue Airways

An example of the scale of transformation is MRO myTECHNIC, a prominent regional MRO player. After implementing SkySelect, two buyers handled 1,761 part requests in just three days—up from a previous average of 15-35 parts per buyer per day. Output increased by more than 10x, leading to transformative gains in productivity and speed.

"The shift to an AI-driven system has changed the way suppliers operate. They're now motivated by quicker processing times, knowing that a speedy response can help them secure the deal. We used to rely on a few regular vendors, but now AI provides us with instant access to the entire market."

Murat Eroğlu, Supply Chain Director at myTECHNIC

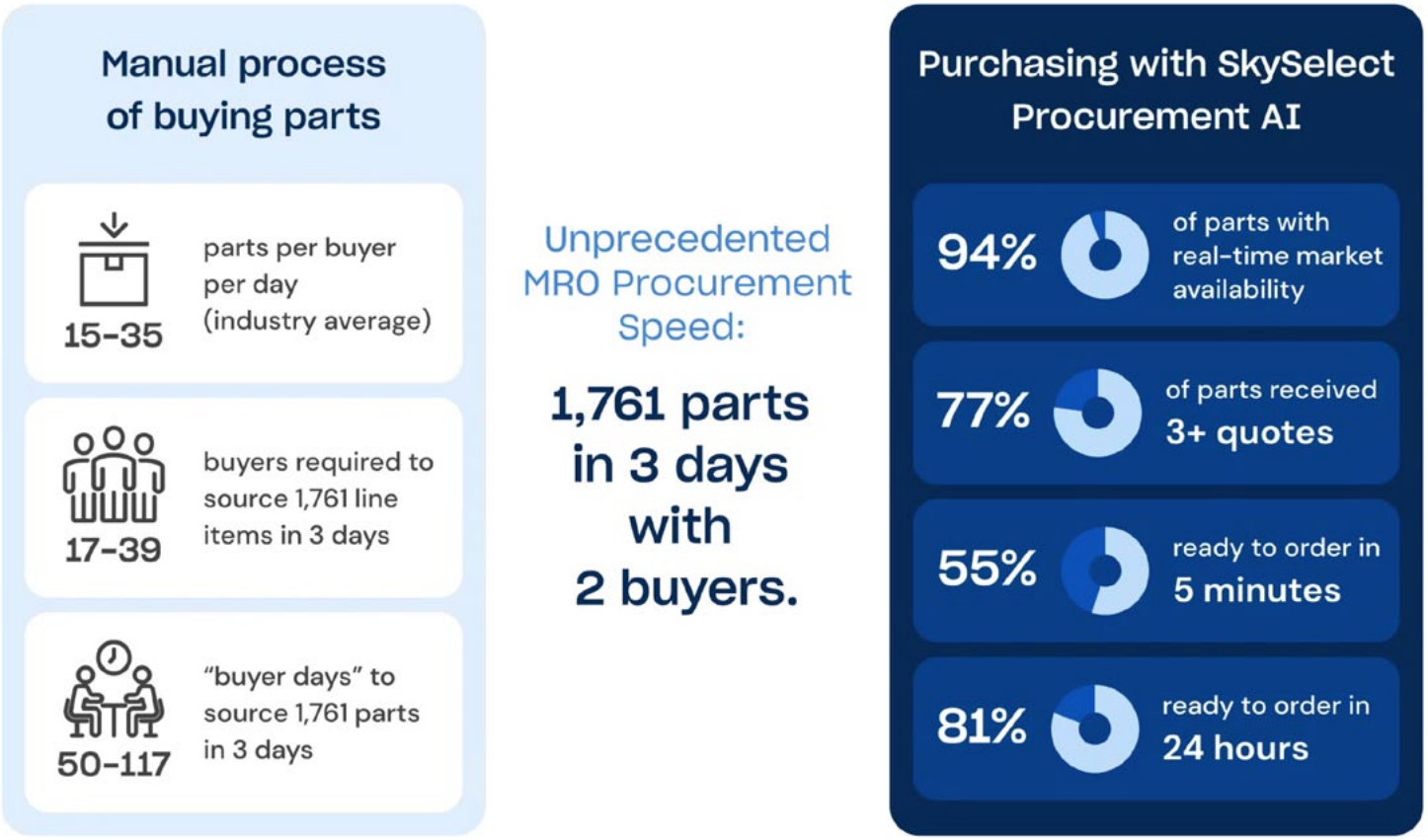
Intelligence To Make Faster Decisions, Not Just Data

SkySelect's platform generates actionable intelligence across three critical dimensions:

- supplier performance tracking that automatically adjusts delivery estimates based on historical reliability;
- supply chain risk prediction that identifies potential delays and proactively offers solutions;
- and market availability insights that inform inventory planning based on what's actually obtainable, not just what's theoretically in stock.

"When an airline in Europe needs a sensor and a supplier in Asia has it on the shelf, our AI connects them instantly," says SkySelect. "We're rewiring the industry's broken connections."

SkySelect's data model is built on a simple principle: your data works for you, not against you. Supplier pricing and customer purchasing patterns remain confidential—the platform generates network-wide intelligence from anonymized patterns, without exposing individual transactions. It's why over 3,000 suppliers actively participate rather than hold back.



"There are many more supply chain opportunities in the aviation market than you can see on a daily basis. The part you are searching for might be lying on someone's shelf, unused. SkySelect helps Magnetic MRO find hidden gems in the aviation market and deliver them with great cost savings and superb quality."

Natalja Lagno, Strategic Purchasing Manager, Magnetic MRO

"Thanks to SkySelect, we've reduced the time spent sourcing parts while receiving competitive offers from suppliers, supporting our efforts to digitalize MTU Maintenance's processes."

Patrick Holzkamp, Director of Purchasing USM at MTU Maintenance

"The speed and data-driven insights from SkySelect have fundamentally changed how we approach aircraft material purchasing. We're not just saving money for the airline; we're gaining days of efficiency, which is vital in the airline industry. This represents a long-term strategic advantage."

Erlend Rugeldal, Director Supply Chain at Widerøe

Realizing Benefits Within Weeks

While extracting value from AI can be notoriously difficult—with MIT reporting a 95% stall rate for pilots—SkySelect has cracked the code on rapid time-to-value. Setup takes just 2-3 hours, with no lengthy IT integration required. There's no need to replace existing systems or clean and standardize data; the platform simply establishes data exchange and starts delivering results.

Azul saved 10% of their annual spend in the first year. JetBlue achieved 3-4x productivity within the first two weeks. Magnetic MRO is automating 79% of purchases. MTU Maintenance reduced sourcing time by 20% while receiving more competitive offers. The pattern is consistent: SkySelect delivers a strong 3-5x ROI from the second month, paying for itself almost immediately.

The supply chain won't fix itself by hiring more people to send more emails. As the aviation industry navigates record demand alongside unprecedented supply chain pressures, SkySelect offers something increasingly rare: a solution that delivers measurable results from day one without a multi-year implementation. For procurement teams stretched thin and supply chains under strain, that's not just helpful—it's essential.

Q&A: Separating Hype from Reality

AviTrader sat down with SkySelect leadership to discuss why 2026 is the tipping point for AI in aviation.

AviTrader MRO 360°: The term "AI" is everywhere. What's the difference between the hype and what SkySelect actually does?

SkySelect: At SkySelect, we go beyond the hype and put AI into practice. For instance, we analyze over 100,000 part numbers every day. If we detect that a specific sensor is trending toward shortage, we can secure stock from a supplier before the airline is even aware of the issue. This isn't just hype; it's a demonstration of operational resilience, proven with more than 30 airlines and MROs worldwide.

How is AI changing the software landscape?

AI will enable hundreds of millions of developers to build software as if they had the capabilities of large teams. Easier software creation means more software, more apps. Enterprise customers who waited months for an ERP enhancement no longer have to wait. The question becomes how you enable an ecosystem that allows co-creation with customers and suppliers.

Is this replacing the human buyer?

Absolutely not. While we handle 80% of the administrative tasks that typically include data entry, tracking number retrieval, and comparing generic quotes, we ensure that the buyer remains involved in decision-making. This approach allows buyers to focus on strategic work (e.g., complex AOGs, contract negotiations, relationship building), while the platform minimizes or eliminates administrative burdens. Essentially, we're the exoskeleton that enhances the capabilities of the human buyer.

What's the outlook for the rest of the year?

In the external market, we don't see pressure on MROs easing: older planes will continue to fly, and the supply of new parts will remain tight. At SkySelect, we believe this year's winners will further embrace technology and agentic AI across their operations. We anticipate an accelerated integration of AI within MRO procurement. We are excited to support airlines and MROs in capturing the benefits in 2026 and beyond.

SKYSELECT AT A GLANCE

Founded: 2017, San Francisco

Investors: Bain Capital Ventures, Lux Capital, RockCreek

Transactions Processed: $6+ billion

Active Suppliers: 3,000+

Customers: JetBlue, Finnair, LATAM, Azul, TAP Air Portugal, MTU Maintenance, Magnetic MRO, myTECHNIC, and more

Results: Up to 70% purchasing automation, 20% cost savings, 5x efficiency gains, 3-5x ROI from month two

Time to Value: 2-3 hours setup, no IT integration required

For more information: www.skyselect.com

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Optimising Landing Gear Maintenance

With the stresses and loads landing gears are subjected to, effective maintenance is critical

By David Dundas

When you consider the extreme lateral, longitudinal and vertical loads an aircraft's landing gear is subjected to every time it lands and takes off, it is no surprise just how much maintenance is required and just how critical it is. If you take the Boeing 737 MAX as an example, the landing gear is certified to handle landing impact forces of up to 2.6g or sink rates of 600 fpm before a mandatory hard-landing inspection is required. Stationary wheels hit the runway at 120–150 knots, so they are instantly accelerated, inducing high torque on the axle and strut. During taxi, the gear handles dynamic loads, including stresses from turning and uneven runway surfaces while with takeoff rotation forces, during rotation, the main gear acts as the pivot point for the entire aircraft, sustaining high compressive loads and the gear, particularly the struts and attachments to the wing structure, experiences significant bending due to the aircraft's weight and acceleration. After take-off, hydraulic pressure (up to 3,000 psi) is used to overcome aerodynamic forces and lift the heavy gear assemblies into the fuselage.

In all the above, your key stress components are likely to be the oleo strut which compresses to absorb vertical energy on impact, side braces and jury struts which handle lateral stability, the trunnion pin which is a high-tensile stress point holding the gear to the wing structure, and the tension arm/scissor link which manages the rotation of the piston and torque loads. If you then imagine that low-cost carriers will operate a 737 MAX for up to 35 flights per week and you can begin to get a clearer picture of what is likely to be involved. Oh, did we mention about hard landings?...

With the level of maintenance required, it is no wonder MROs are constantly looking to optimise the whole landing gear maintenance set-up, and we decided to approach four leading operators to get a better picture of how they deal with this challenge.

How should operators approach long-term landing gear maintenance planning across an aircraft's life?

Operators should take a comprehensive, long term view of landing gear maintenance planning across the full life of the aircraft. This starts with establishing appropriate maintenance reserves to support the expected overhaul cycle, and ensuring that funding aligns with the operator's lifetime overhaul model. Andy Wheeler, Divisional Vice President & Managing Director, AEM / AMETEK MRO expands further. "Because landing gear shops often book up well in advance, overhaul slots should be secured early to avoid unplanned downtime or last-minute costs. Planning should also account for differences between first and second overhauls, as the scope, material demand

Andy Wheeler, Divisional Vice President & Managing Director, AEM/AMETEK MRO

> ***"Because landing gear shops often book up well in advance, overhaul slots should be secured early to avoid unplanned downtime or last-minute costs."***
>
> *Andy Wheeler, Divisional Vice President & Managing Director, AEM/AMETEK MRO*

and cost can vary considerably. Operating conditions play a major role in determining actual maintenance intervals too. High-cycle operations, challenging environments, and exposure to corrosive conditions can all drive earlier or more extensive work. By regularly reviewing utilisation, reliability trends, and environmental factors, operators can refine their plans and maintain consistent fleet availability."

Karolis Jurkevičius, VP Landing Gear & Major Assets, APOC Aviation is firmly of the belief that many carriers don't fully understand the timescale involved for a landing gear shop visit. He explains: "Most airlines try to accommodate landing gear shop visits during heavy checks, expecting the gear to be repaired while the aircraft is already in base maintenance. This is the wrong approach. Landing gear shop visits typically have a much longer turnaround time (TAT) compared to base maintenance. When taking into account gear removal, shipment to the shop, overhaul TAT, return logistics, and re-installation, the total process can easily take 4–5 months for narrowbody aircraft and up to a year for some wide-bodies. Even though A330 overhaul capacity and parts supply are improving, current shop TATs are still a minimum of 120 days, as officially quoted by the majority of MROs. We also see that when operators face long landing gear TATs, they start looking for alternative solutions such as leasing, exchange, or outright purchase. However, this is often another incorrect assumption, as ready-to-go assets are rarely available. Most asset owners keep landing gear in stock unrepaired and uninspected, waiting for a customer order before committing to inspection or overhaul. The situation is even more challenging for widebody platforms such as the A330 or B777-300ER, where limited availability drives high lease, exchange, and purchase prices."

Raul Cruz-Alvarez, CEO & Accountable Manager, Landing Gear Technologies LLC puts the situation nice and succinctly when he says that: "... planning for landing gear maintenance has to be one of the easiest in the entire aircraft. If the aircraft accumulates 1 or 20,000 flight cycles they must be overhauled every 10 to 12 years depending on the aircraft. Landing gears are complex pieces of equipment and generally only come off for overhauls within that time period." Stephen Spender, Director of Sales - Landing Gear, Werner Aero certainly recommends not leaving things to the last minute. "Plan to maximise green time use and add flexibility, leaving it to the last minute only drives up cost and A/C down time. Work with an MRO with comparable assets as this helps to understand the operator's goal and demonstrate material and production planning for short- and long-term solutions," he advises.

Where do you see the greatest opportunities for cost optimisation without compromising safety or compliance?

Here, among a number of things, Karolis Jurkevičius has his focus on the choice of parts as being a key area to pare back costs. "The greatest opportunities for cost optimisation – without compromising safety or compliance – come from working with specialised asset managers such as APOC, who have invested in both landing gear asset pools and spare parts inventories. By actively managing repairs and material sourcing, costs can be significantly reduced. This includes encouraging MROs to use approved alternative parts and repairs instead of defaulting to OEM new material, where permitted. In addition, airlines should be open to using used serviceable material (USM) to replace scrapped parts, provided full traceability and regulatory compliance are maintained. Operators that rely on one-off repairs or attempt to source parts reactively – based solely on shop findings and short-term market availability – often face material shortages or inflated pricing. In contrast, contracting in advance with landing gear asset and parts owners allows operators to secure availability, control costs, and avoid exposure to

Raul Cruz-Alvarez, CEO & Accountable Manager, Landing Gear Technologies LLC

> ***"The easiest way to optimise cost is through strategic buying of spares and getting the team members to be more efficient in each process. Otherwise, a proper overhaul is strictly detail in each CMM."***
>
> *Raul Cruz-Alvarez, CEO & Accountable Manager, Landing Gear Technologies LLC*

volatile market conditions. Proactive asset pooling and repair management, rather than ad-hoc sourcing, is where the most sustainable cost optimisation can be achieved," he suggests.

Raul Cruz-Alvarez and Stephen Spender have differing views on this topic, with Cruz-Alvarez proposing that: "The easiest way to optimise cost is through strategic buying of spares and getting the team members to be more efficient in each process. Otherwise, a proper overhaul is strictly detail in each CMM." Spender, on the other hand, feels that: "Reliable partners (MRO's & material suppliers) with shared values that demonstrate product knowledge, commitment towards the same goals with a reliable and robust quality system," are a good option.

Andy Wheeler is of a similar mind to Karolis Jurkevičius in terms of the use, or rather lack of use, of USM. He tells us that: "There are several areas where operators can optimise landing gear maintenance costs without compromising safety or compliance. One of the most effective is to maximise the use of concessions and repairs rather than automatically replacing components with new. Many components can be safely restored to serviceable condition when supported by OEM-approved repairs like those provided by AEM/AMETEK MRO, which can significantly reduce overall overhaul costs. Using used serviceable materials (USM) is another cost-efficient option when appropriate and properly certified, particularly for high-value items with long lead times. Regular, high-quality inspections also play a key role. Identifying wear, corrosion, or minor issues early helps prevent them from developing into major findings at overhaul, improving both cost control and planning accuracy. A combination of smart repair decisions, strategic USM use and proactive inspections can deliver meaningful savings while keeping safety central."

Stephen Spender, Director of Sales - Landing Gear, Werner Aero

How do parts availability, repair development, and OEM support affect turnaround times?

Parts availability, repair development, and OEM support are key drivers of turnaround time (TAT) for landing gear overhauls. No MRO will fully guarantee overhaul TAT, as all contracts clearly state that turnaround times are subject to parts availability. Karolis Jurkevičius goes further when he points out that: "Recent experience with A321 overhauls and A330 enhanced overhauls has shown that long OEM lead times, even for relatively low-value parts, can significantly extend TAT. In cases where no used serviceable material is available on the secondary market, operators are forced to rely solely on OEM supply. This can result in overhauls being extended – sometimes up to a year – as repairs cannot be completed and landing gear cannot be fully assembled due to missing components. This highlights why early planning remains critical. While it cannot eliminate all risks, working with specialised asset managers such as APOC can help mitigate delays by maintaining parts availability and proactively managing repair solutions. Although not a full guarantee, this approach significantly reduces exposure to material shortages and unplanned TAT extensions." Meanwhile, Raul Cruz-Alvarez is quite blunt when it comes to this situation, making it clear that: "This is the biggest challenge we are facing today, the supply chain has yet to recover and after five years of hoping I personally don't see it happening anytime soon. My opinion is that OEMs have figured out that the industry will pay the extra charges for expedition fees and that is found money."

Andy Wheeler seems to be of the opinion that parts availability has the greatest effect on turnaround times, telling us that: "Parts availability, repair development, and OEM support all have a direct impact on turnaround time (TAT). Parts availability is often the biggest driver. If a component is on long lead time or suddenly becomes scarce, it can delay the entire overhaul. While post pandemic material constraints created real challenges, supply chains have stabilised more recently. Repair development can also extend TAT, especially when a new or updated repair is needed. Fast, responsive OEM support makes a big difference here, helping to keep the shop visit moving. Obsolescence on older platforms remains an ongoing issue, as sourcing alternatives or serviceable units can take longer. While these factors can influence TAT, proactive planning and realistic buffers help maintain reliable timelines for operators." Additionally, Stephen Spender's thinking is not that far detached from Wheeler's thoughts on the matter, suggesting that: "All outsourced support, whether OEM or any supplier needs to be reliable as when it is not, the MRO is put in a difficult situation to achieve TAT and on-time delivery. Parts availability and supply chain with lead time of 15, 30 or 45 days and in some cases no availability at all is a huge complexity for TAT and on time delivery. You can only pre plan so much around lead time on material. Repair development can help with TAT, as it gives the MRO in house capability and control of the repair time frame."

How does landing gear maintenance status impact asset value and lease negotiations?

Andy Wheeler tells us that AEM does not have extensive direct involvement in aircraft valuations or lease negotiations, but he is able to suggest that "...from our experience, landing gear maintenance status is an important consideration. Most lease agreements specify whether the gear must be overhauled at end of lease, typically based on the aircraft's age, utilisation, and whether it is likely to transition to another operator. While models vary, most lessors prefer the landing gear to be returned in overhauled condition to protect asset value and

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support onward remarketing. We have also seen this managed through tripartite agreements, where the lessor holds the reserves and funds the overhaul on the operator's behalf." Meanwhile, Stephen Spender at Werner Aero is quite clear in his thoughts. "Massively, the price difference between as removed, green time remaining and overhauled units can be hundreds of thousands of dollars. But it is always about managing risk, and who wants the risk?" he asks.

Karolis Jurkevičius at APOC Aviation definitely has concerns over costs when availability of landing gear for short-term lease is limited. He details that: "Landing gear maintenance status has a direct impact on both asset value and lease negotiations. The longer the turnaround time (TAT), the greater the immediate need for replacement landing gear assets. If no alternatives are planned in advance and operators still intend to reinstall their own landing gear during base maintenance, any parts shortages at the shop will extend TAT and can ultimately lead to redelivery failure. In such cases, operators are forced to seek alternative solutions in the market to support daily operations. For most aircraft types, the availability of landing gear for short-term lease is limited, which naturally drives lease rates upward. If no lease assets are available, operators must consider exchange or outright purchase options. Depending on the urgency of the requirement and the level of market availability, asset values can increase significantly." To conclude, Raul Cruz-Alvarez at Landing Gear Technologies LLC. makes a very valid comment when he says that: "This is a tricky question as it really depends on the leasing company if the aircraft will fly again or if it will be parted out. Generally, there are maintenance reserves to cover the overhaul if the lease was properly negotiated."

What common issues arise at lease return related to landing gear condition or documentation?

Karolis Jurkevičius sees that one of the most common issues relates to landing gear documentation, which is increasingly being assessed not only from a technical perspective but also from a commercial and regulatory standpoint. He goes on to suggest that: "From a technical point of view, lessors and operators are right to focus on compliance, however, this is only part of the picture. The true value of a landing gear lies in its paperwork (PPW). Commercial traceability is just as important as technical records. In today's environment, this has become even more critical due to global sanctions and regulatory restrictions, where certain countries, operators, or counterparties may be subject to limitations. As a result, it is essential to ensure full historical traceability before accepting landing gear into a pool or releasing it to a buyer or lessee. At APOC, we apply the highest PPW and quality standards across all landing gear assets. This approach ensures that every asset delivered to our clients meets not only technical and regulatory requirements but also the highest commercial and compliance standards, allowing us to provide reliable assets and consistent service to all customers."

Andy wheeler feels that at lease return, the most common issues tend to relate to documentation rather than the physical condition of the landing gear. He further advises that: "Lessors typically expect full back-to-birth traceability, including non incident statements and complete records for all life limited and major components. Although maintaining these records is the operator's responsibility, AEM/AMETEK MRO does occasionally receive requests where documents are missing or incomplete. We assist where possible, but gaps in traceability can become a sticking point in the return process." On the other hand, Raul Cruz-Alvarez points out that: "Our experience has been the documentation, if life limited parts are changed on the line or while undergoing routine maintenance and not properly documented that is high dollar parts will need to be replaced just due to documentation," while to round things off, Stephen Spender sees the answer as being "Back-to-birth issues of installed life-limited parts – it can have a large commercial impact. In general, though, the agreement is clear on the return expectations, and mostly the lessor will enforce the agreement including penalties."

Karolis Jurkevičius, VP Landing Gear & Major Assets, APOC Aviation

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> *Karolis Jurkevičius, VP Landing Gear & Major Assets, APOC Aviation*

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The Role of RFID Tracking in Aircraft Maintenance Today

How such an impactful tool is transforming aircraft maintenance

By David Dundas

An Introduction to RFID

For those of you who have not come across the acronym before, RFID stands for radio-frequency identification, and it is a technology whose roots can be traced back to the time of the Second World War and the development of radar systems. While a basic radar system was being developed by both the Germans and the British, the problem remained that while airborne aircraft could be detected, initially there was no way of distinguishing between friend or foe. While the Germans' crude solution was to roll their fighter planes to alter the radio signal sent back, the British developed a system called IFF (identify friend or foe) where aircraft were fitted with a transmitter and when that transmitter received a signal from the radar station on the ground, it would broadcast back an identifying signal to confirm it was an allied aircraft. Thus, the first RFID system was born.

In the 1960s a major development was the use of tracking solutions to minimise product theft through the creation of the electronic article surveillance (EAS) solution, something we take pretty much for granted today as being associated with tags attached to clothes that have to be removed after purchase and before leaving the store. The 1970s saw massive investment in academic research, but with few commercial results, though the 1980s would see much of that research come to fruition in the fields of transportation (US toll fees) personal access, factory automation and animal tagging. It is also worth noting that the development of the internet also had a major influence on the development of RFID systems as prior to this, focus was on improving ways information could be stored on RFID tags. With the development of the internet, tags could simply provide a reference number and data associated with that number could be altered online.

The 1990s then saw the establishment of the Auto-ID Center based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and which focused on low-cost RFID tags, which researchers hoped could be placed on a variety of products and tracked through the entirety of the supply chain. As a direct consequence, come the 2000s, the RFID landscape began to change dramatically with the arrival of the Electronic Product Code (EPC) numbering system which enabled universal identifiers for a vast array of products and other physical objects. These numbers were typically encoded on RFID tags and used for tracking inventory, assets, and personnel.

Energy-efficient RFID tags have been another significant advancement, providing a combination of high performance and minimal power consumption. These tags have proven to be ideal for large-scale deployments and long-term applications, e.g., extensive asset tracking and continuous monitoring in supply chains. Enhanced connectivity and seamless integration with other digital systems has helped to further streamline supply chain management, making processes more transparent and responsive. Beyond this, emerging trends such as the integration of RFID with artificial intelligence (AI) are providing even greater predictive analytics, optimised logistics, and enhanced traceability, shoring up RFID's role as a cornerstone technology for the future of interconnected and automated industries.


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Modern RFID Tracking in Aircraft Maintenance: Enhancing Safety, Efficiency, and Compliance

Aircraft maintenance is one of the most safety-critical activities in aviation as it requires total precision, rigorous documentation, and strict control of tools, parts, and processes. As aircraft fleets become more complex and operational pressures increase, maintenance organisations are finding themselves under constant demand to reduce turnaround time yet still maintaining the highest standards of airworthiness. In this environment, modern tracking technologies are becoming key, and among them, RFID has emerged as one of the most impactful tools for transforming aircraft maintenance operations. Today, RFID tracking is no longer limited to warehouse logistics or retail inventory and instead, in the aviation sector, it is increasingly being deployed as a powerful enabler of smarter maintenance, improved tool accountability, enhanced supply chain transparency, and stronger regulatory compliance. By providing real-time visibility into assets, RFID is effectively supporting the industry's digitisation and data-driven MRO practices.

From Manual Control to Digital Traceability

In the past, aircraft maintenance organisations have relied on manual systems for tracking tools and components where tool sign-in/sign-out logs, barcode scanning, and paper-based documentation have been standard practice for decades. Although these methods have been undoubtedly effective, there is no escaping the fact that they have often been time-consuming, prone to human error, and limited in providing real-time situational awareness. The challenge has always been that in a hangar environment where hundreds of tools may be used across multiple shifts, and thousands of parts must be controlled through strict traceability requirements, manual tracking systems can introduce operational risks as missing tools, misplaced components, or incomplete documentation can result in costly delays, safety incidents, or regulatory findings. As a solution to the challenge, RFID offers a major improvement through enabling automated identification and tracking without the need for line-of-sight scanning. This is because RFID tags embedded in tools, consumables, rotable components, or even personnel badges can be detected instantly by RFID readers placed at key points within the maintenance environment.

How RFID Works in the MRO Context

RFID systems consist of three primary elements which are tags, readers and software platforms. The tags, which can be be passive or active, store digital identification data, with passive tags requiring no internal power source and which are activated by the reader's signal. This makes them very suitable for the likes of tool tracking and part identification, while active tags contain their own power supply and can transmit over much longer distances and are more often used for high-value assets or equipment tracking. As for the RFID readers, these can be either handheld devices used by technicians or fixed installations located at tool cribs, hangar entrances, in storage rooms and work zones, so that when an item with an RFID tag passes through a reader's detection field, the system automatically records its presence and movement. The real value of RFID comes through integration with digital maintenance systems as, when connected to enterprise resource planning (ERP) platforms, maintenance tracking software, or electronic task cards, RFID provides a live digital thread linking physical assets to operational data.

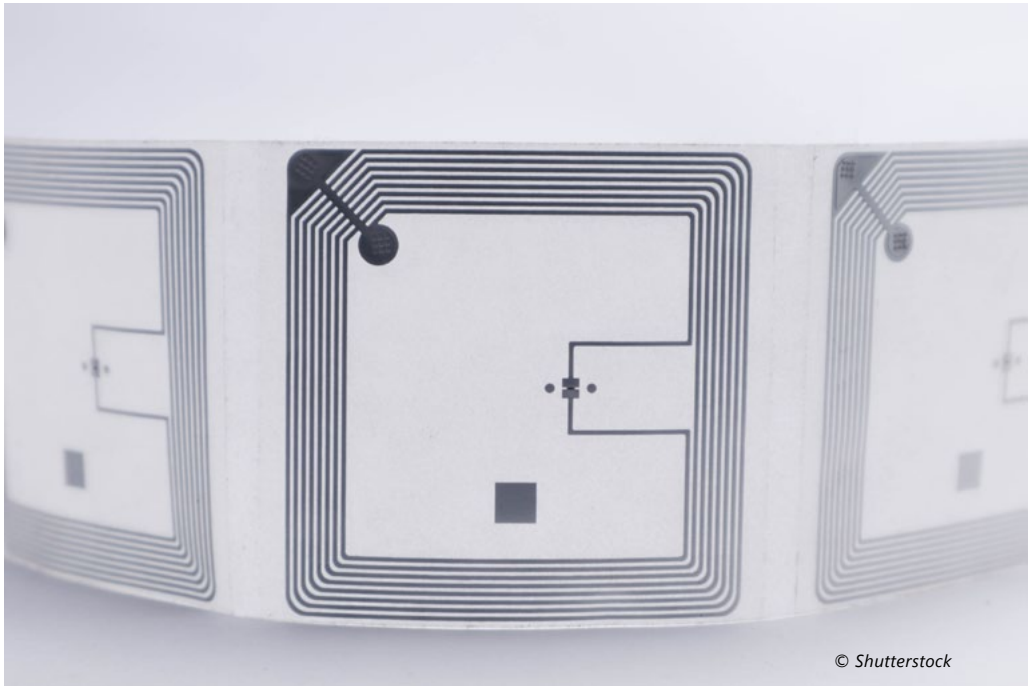
Tool Control and FOD Prevention

One of the most critical applications of RFID in aircraft maintenance is tool control as Foreign Object Debris (FOD) represents a constant safety risk, and tool misplacement is a leading contributor. A forgotten wrench or drill bit inside an aircraft structure can have catastrophic consequences. RFID-enabled tool tracking is a great way to mitigate this risk by ensuring that every tool is accounted for before, during, and after maintenance tasks as tools can be automatically logged when removed from storage, tracked while in use, and verified upon return. Additionally, some systems allow for real-time alerts if a tool enters a restricted area or is not returned within a defined timeframe. Compared with manual shadow boards and checklists, RFID provides a higher level of assurance and reduces reliance on memory and procedural discipline alone, while for regulators and safety auditors, RFID-supported tool control also offers stronger evidence of compliance.

Component Tracking and Lifecycle Management

Beyond its implementation with tools, RFID also plays an increasingly important role in aircraft component tracking. Aviation parts require full traceability, including installation history, maintenance records, life limits, and certification status

so, while barcodes have supported this for years, RFID introduces automation and greater resilience in harsh environments. This is because RFID tags can store or link to critical part information, enabling maintenance teams to verify component identity instantly, which reduces the risk of installing incorrect or unserviceable parts and supports faster inspections and audits. For rotable components such as landing gear parts, avionics units, or engine accessories, RFID improves lifecycle monitoring by capturing each movement between aircraft, workshops, and storage locations and, over time, this data supports predictive planning and inventory optimisation.



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Improving Inventory and Supply Chain Visibility

Over recent years, supply chain disruption and parts shortages have become major challenges for MRO organisations worldwide, so knowing exactly where critical inventory is located—and whether it is serviceable—has become essential. Thus, RFID-enabled inventory management provides real-time stock visibility across warehouses, hangars, and remote line stations and unlike traditional inventory systems that rely on periodic counts, RFID allows continuous monitoring of part movements, reducing the risk of shortages, overstocking, or misplaced materials. This capability is particularly valuable in large maintenance bases where thousands of serialised parts must be managed efficiently as RFID also supports pooling programmes and shared inventory models by providing transparency and accountability between operators and suppliers.

Workforce Efficiency and Reduced Downtime

Aircraft maintenance is highly labour intensive, and technician productivity is often negatively impacted by time spent searching for tools, waiting for parts, or resolving documentation discrepancies, so the use of RFID helps reduce these inefficiencies by streamlining asset availability and task preparation. Additionally, when tools and components are digitally visible, technicians can locate required equipment much faster, and maintenance planners can ensure that resources are staged before work begins, all of which contributes directly to reduced aircraft ground time and improved turnaround performance. Finally, RFID systems also support shift handovers by providing clear status updates on which assets are currently in use and where they are located, therefore helping to reduce miscommunication across teams.

Regulatory Compliance and Digital Documentation

Aviation maintenance operates under strict oversight, and regulatory frameworks such as EASA Part-145 and FAA repair station requirements demand robust documentation and control processes, so RFID is able to enhance compliance by creating automatic audit trails. This is because every tool movement, component transfer, and inventory transaction can be logged digitally with timestamps and user identification, which automatically reduces the administrative burden of manual recordkeeping while strengthening traceability. Beyond this, during audits or incident investigations, RFID data can also provide clear evidence of procedural adherence and asset accountability.

Challenges and Implementation Considerations

However, a word of caution as despite its benefits, RFID adoption in aircraft maintenance does not come without challenges. For example, hangar environments contain metal structures, electromagnetic interference, and complex geometries that can affect signal performance, so selecting the right tag types, reader placement, and system calibration is essential for reliable operation. Beyond this, cost is another consideration, particularly for large-scale deployments involving thousands of tagged assets. However, on the plus side, many organisations find that the return on investment is justified through reduced tool losses, improved efficiency, and fewer operational disruptions. Additionally, integration with existing IT infrastructure is also critical as RFID delivers maximum value when linked to maintenance management systems rather than operating as a standalone technology.

The Future of RFID in Aviation MRO

As the aviation industry continues its digital transformation, RFID is likely to play an even greater role in enabling smart maintenance ecosystems and future developments may well include deeper integration with predictive maintenance platforms, automated work package management, and advanced analytics. Combined with technologies such as IoT sensors, blockchain-based part traceability, and AI-driven planning tools, RFID contributes to the vision of a fully connected and transparent maintenance environment. Ultimately, modern RFID tracking represents more than a technological upgrade—it is a strategic step toward safer, more efficient, and more resilient aircraft maintenance operations.

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Maintenance Mythbuster: "Line Maintenance Is Less Critical Than Heavy Checks"

There could be a genuine misconception that real maintenance takes place in the hangar

By David Dundas

The Misconception of "Real Maintenance Happens in the Hangar"

In the world of aircraft maintenance, there is a temptation to pay almost too much attention to heavy checks and major overhauls, but then it is difficult not to. After all, these are major events and if we were to look at a C-check for a wide-body jet, this takes an inordinate amount of planning and organising, involves huge amounts of manpower, and will incur a significant cost. Because this is such a major undertaking, it is highly 'visible' and therefore tends to overshadow line maintenance, leading to the misconception that line maintenance is of appreciably less importance. While line maintenance is perhaps classed more as 'routine', is fast-paced and operationally driven, a heavy check is seen more as the 'big brother', the 'serious maintenance' which guarantees airworthiness. But surely this is a narrow-minded opinion and a misunderstanding of the role of line maintenance as it is most definitely not secondary. Without question it is front-line safety work which plays a key and immediate role in ensuring aircraft integrity.

Line Maintenance Is the First Barrier to Operational Risk

Line maintenance is very much a part of daily aircraft operations as it involves walkaround inspections, defect rectification, troubleshooting, component replacement, and compliance, with minimum equipment list requirements. Such activities take place under tight time constraints, often between flights, and directly determine whether an aircraft is safe to fly. When you look at the situation more realistically, heavy maintenance focuses more on long-term structural integrity, involves scheduled inspections and is more a proactive action, while line maintenance ensures that immediate operational risks are identified and controlled and by its very nature is more proactive. A defect discovered on the line is not theoretical—it is a real-time airworthiness concern that must be addressed before the very next flight.

High-Pressure Conditions Increase Criticality

Line maintenance is a very high-pressure environment that can sometimes have to be carried out in the most challenging of weather conditions, at night as well as during the day, with limited access and frequently narrow time windows. Such conditions make line maintenance uniquely critical as the ability to troubleshoot accurately, apply procedures correctly and maintain discipline under time pressure is essential for safe flight operations.

Some of the Smallest Tasks Can Have the Greatest of Consequences

As the expression goes, "size isn't everything", and just because some line


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maintenance tasks may seem petty in relation to tasks carried out during a heavy check, their importance shouldn't be underestimated. For example, while replacing a sensor, troubleshooting an avionics message, or addressing a tyre issue may seem routine and straightforward compared with structural inspections or major system overhauls, aviation safety is not determined by the size of the task, but by its impact on dispatch readiness. Many significant incidents begin with minor unresolved or unnoticed defects, though line maintenance is often where early warning signs appear, and where the opportunity exists to resolve the problem. Consequently, line maintenance is not 'less important work,' but critical work carried out at the most operationally sensitive stage.

The Complexity of Modern Aircraft Makes Line Maintenance More Demanding

Modern aircraft are increasingly dependent on integrated avionics, software-driven systems, and digital fault monitoring and as a direct result, maintenance technicians now have to interpret fault codes, evaluate system messages, and distinguish between transient alerts and genuine failures. Troubleshooting is often more complex than simple part replacement, but skills which require deep systems knowledge and exceptional diagnostic skills. The line environment is therefore not only fast-paced but technically demanding, so in many cases, line maintenance teams are the first to encounter and identify new failure patterns, which makes their expertise essential for fleet-wide reliability.

Heavy Checks and Line Maintenance Are Complementary, Not Hierarchical

Heavy maintenance and line maintenance may serve equally vital functions, but they are very, very different in terms of execution. For example, heavy checks address long-term airworthiness through deep inspections, structural repairs, and major planned interventions, whereas line maintenance ensures day-to-day operational safety, defect management, and dispatch integrity. Any misconception likely occurs when these functions are compared as if one is more important than the other. In reality, aviation safety is equally dependent on both as heavy checks provide the foundation of long-term reliability, while line maintenance provides the continuous real-time assurance that aircraft remain safe between those checks.

Line Maintenance as the Face of Safety Culture

While a C-check may be 'seen' as a major and therefore interpreted as a more important event, in reality, line maintenance is usually the most visible maintenance function to flight crews, dispatchers, and passengers. It is where safety culture is demonstrated daily through professionalism, discipline, and attention to detail and those in charge must have the confidence and courage to stop a departure if there are any concerns. In many ways, line maintenance is where the operational safety system is tested most directly as the decisions made on the line have immediate consequences where flight safety is concerned.

Conclusion: Line Maintenance is Frontline Airworthiness

From the above, you may now be able to see that the myth that line maintenance is less critical than heavy checks overlooks the true role of line work in aviation. Line maintenance is not simply routine servicing; it is the frontline defence that ensures aircraft are safe, legal, and reliable whenever they take to the skies. Performed under high pressure and demanding conditions, line maintenance requires technical expertise, procedural discipline, and strong safety judgment and though heavy checks may be larger in scale, line maintenance is immediate in impact. The outcome? In the realms of commercial aviation, airworthiness is not assured solely by work carried out in the hangar—it is also assured on a daily basis on the line, one dispatch after the next...

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Dylan Wolin

AAR CORP.'s Board of Directors has named **Dylan Wolin** as Chief Financial Officer, effective February 23, 2026. In the role, Wolin will oversee finance, accounting, tax, treasury, investor relations and corporate development. Wolin will return to AAR from Federal Signal Corporation, where he served from 2024 to 2026 as president of Elgin, Trackless and Vactor, the company's municipal-focused specialty vehicle businesses. Between 2017 and 2024, Wolin led AAR's strategic and corporate development, treasury and investor relations functions. During this period, he played a key role in the company's portfolio repositioning, capital markets activity and strategic planning, including the acquisitions of Trax and Triumph Product Support. Prior to joining AAR and Federal Signal, Wolin was a director in Boeing's Corporate Development group, leading merger, acquisition and joint venture transactions. Earlier, he served as a vice president in Deutsche Bank's Global Industrials Group within its investment banking division and began his career as an Associate at McManus & Miles, a boutique investment bank specialising in financial advisory and private placements. Wolin holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Tufts University and an MBA in Finance from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Steven Bridgland

Willis Lease Finance Corporation (WLFC) has appointed **Steven Bridgland** as Head of Investor Relations and Capital Markets for its newly launched asset management platform, Willis Aviation Capital. In this role, Bridgland will oversee day-to-day management of existing investor relationships, drive the development of new sources of capital and support capital deployment across the platform's investment activities. Bridgland brings more than 30 years of experience in aviation finance, with extensive expertise in equity and debt capital markets, fund formation, investor relations and aircraft leasing. His career spans senior roles at banks, investment banks and aircraft asset management businesses, including 17 years in senior capital markets and origination positions at Deucalion Aviation. He has also held senior roles at DVB, RBC Capital Markets and Greenwich NatWest. He is widely recognised for his global network of institutional investors and his experience structuring aviation funds and joint ventures across Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Oscar Torres

OTR has appointed **Oscar Torres** as President and Chief Executive Officer, effective January 5, 2026, marking a key leadership transition as the company positions itself for its next phase of development. The appointment brings to OTR a senior executive with more than 25 years of leadership experience in private equity–backed businesses and a strong track record in the global aerospace aftermarket. Torres has spent the majority of his career at Kellstrom Aerospace, a major distributor and technical services provider to the aviation industry. During his time at the company, he progressed through a series of senior leadership roles, including Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer and ultimately Chief Executive Officer.

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This breadth of experience across finance, operations and executive management has given him a comprehensive understanding of the commercial and operational drivers of the aerospace aftermarket. While at Kellstrom Aerospace, Torres led a range of initiatives aimed at improving operational performance and delivering sustainable, long-term growth. He was closely involved in shaping the company's strategic direction and played a central role in multiple acquisitions and divestitures, helping to strengthen Kellstrom's market position and expand its global footprint. Under his leadership, the business further established itself as a key supply-chain solutions provider to airlines, original equipment manufacturers, maintenance, repair and overhaul organisations, and aircraft lessors around the world.

Fred Browne

Aergo Capital, the global aircraft lessor and a subsidiary of AB CarVal, has announced that Chief Executive Officer (CEO) **Fred Browne** will step down at the end of January as part of a structured and planned leadership transition. As part of the succession process, **Eugene O'Reilly**, currently Chief Operating Officer, has been appointed Acting Chief Executive Officer, ensuring continuity as the company builds on the strong platform established under Browne's leadership. Browne has led Aergo Capital since its founding in 1999, playing a pivotal role in shaping the business and driving its long-term growth and success. To support a smooth handover, he will remain with the company until the end of the month before formally transitioning out of the business. **Greg Belonogoff**, Principal, Aviation Leasing at AB CarVal, paid tribute to Browne's contribution, saying: "Fred has been instrumental in building Aergo into the world-class platform it is today, and we are immensely grateful for his leadership and dedication since AB CarVal acquired the business in 2014." He added: "This planned transition is a testament to our ongoing commitment to Aergo's long-term stability and growth, as we continue to focus on delivering results for clients and investors."

Christian Hansen

Christian Hansen is joining SkyWorks as Senior Advisor, further strengthening the company's senior coverage team as SkyWorks continues to expand its global advisory and investment banking platform. Hansen brings a global perspective and deep expertise in aviation finance, developed over more than three decades of advising airlines, lessors and financial institutions. SkyWorks said his experience and long-standing industry relationships will enhance the firm's ability to deliver advisory and capital solutions to clients across market cycles. He joins SkyWorks following a distinguished 35-year career at international law firm White & Case, where he held a number of senior leadership positions. Most recently, he led the firm's Latin America practice and its global Asset Finance practice. In these roles, he advised on a wide range of complex aviation and structured finance matters. Hansen's professional background spans aircraft and engine financings, restructurings, OEM negotiations, joint ventures, long-term maintenance arrangements and corporate financing transactions. This breadth of experience positions him as a strategic resource for SkyWorks and its global client base. Hansen is admitted to the New York and Florida bars and holds a Juris Doctor degree from New York University.

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