



Maintenance

# Middle ground

AAR's European operations stand between headquarters in the US and the important Asian market. Ian Harbison reports

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**Paul Richardson**, Vice President of Sales, AAR Aviation, says a good example of this is the AOG customer support centre in London-Gatwick, which has recently been expanded. Using a multi-shift system, it shares worldwide coverage with its counterpart in Chicago via a single customer contact point. It can call on urgent stock from a warehouse network with locations in Chicago, Hanover, Brussels, Dubai, Singapore and Shanghai. He comments that parts sales are increasing as a result of the changes.

Some of the locations are the result of customer relationships – Hanover reflects a long-standing cooperation with MTU Maintenance – and then there are smaller facilities as well, such as Brussels and Dublin, as well as London-Heathrow and Paris (both covering airframe components and engines).

The company has its own flight hour support programmes, providing integrated component support. Earlier this year, it signed an eight-year component repair and exchange deal with Utair Aviation in Russia for Boeing 737 and ATR 72 fleets. However, drawing on AAR's IT experience, it will also provide reliability engineering support to improve on-wing component reliability.

He says the company is willing to invest in new aircraft types and this has been rewarded by a contract from Air Malta for Airbus A320neo airframe, engine and APU LRUs. This involves the LEAP-1A engine, while a similar contract signed last year with flydubai covers the LEAP-1B and the Boeing 737 MAX 8.

Components from these contracts will end up at AAR Aircraft Component Repair – Amsterdam, this also being a mirror of a facility in Chicago. An indication of AAR's long-term involvement in Europe, this opened in 1967 as Allen Airmotive. Capabilities include APUs, avionics, electro-mechanical components, fuel systems, gearboxes, generators, hydraulics and pneumatics. While there is synergy between two facilities and they are linked via the company's Inventory Management and Order Processing System, they each have niche capabilities as well, again to assist the customer. Amsterdam covers Europe, Middle East and Africa, although some African work may move when a repair facility supporting South African Airways Technical becomes fully operational.

The workload is changing in Amsterdam as another of AAR's interests, taking over product support from OEMs, provides fresh inputs. This year has seen a long-term Repair and Overhaul License agreement and a Parts Supply agreement with Honeywell Aerospace. This covers over 1,800 part numbers including pneumatics, hydraulics and power generation for Boeing, Airbus and regional aircraft types. AAR will source over 4,000 material supply piece part items from Honeywell, which will also provide repair and overhaul of LRUs to support AAR's growing flight-hour component support programme for airline fleets worldwide. Also in 2018, it signed a strategic partnership with Sumitomo Precision Products to provide global support for the IAE V2500 pneumatic starter and starter air valve and related sub-assembly components.

Another part of the European operation is UK-based Airinmar, which specialises in component repair cycle management. It works closely with the AAR Aircraft Component Repair facilities, but has its own customer base, for example, the start of 2018 saw a three-year contract with Azul in Brazil to enhance the airline's supply chain management and performance. In developing its own systems and procedures, it can use the AAR network as a test bed and, in turn, can assist AAR as it grows the digital portfolio. There is also constant dialogue to find alternative sources of supply for both sides.

Europe will continue to be a strong focus for AAR, concludes Richardson, and will also support the company's growth in developing markets like Africa, Russia and the CIS.