

FEEDING FLIGHT OR FRAUD?

As demand for aircraft spares surges, so does the threat of counterfeit parts. World Aero's **Phil Randell** questions if the industry is doing enough to prevent the next scandal

Barely a year has passed since the uncovering of the AOG Technics scandal, and I can't help but think it won't be long until we see another case like it.

It is widely known that AOG Technics used forged paperwork to sell high value aircraft spares, in particular extremely expensive and critical turbine parts of which a used one is almost indistinguishable from a factory new item.

Many buyers were duped by falsified release certificates containing signatures of fictitious technicians or real employees, copied and pasted into place onto convincing-looking paperwork. And judging by the volume of bogus spares in circulation, it was seemingly well executed, until a very sharp-eyed inspector noticed something amiss.



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PHIL RANDELL

owner and chief executive,
World Aero

AOG Technics exploited the post-pandemic aviation resurgence which had been starved by a global shortage of aircraft spares and, with that, a move away from traditional supply chains with long-established sources. Add to that the recent sanctions placed on Russia, and the resulting demand is huge, all served by a frenzy of suppliers hungry to make deals work.

Seemingly every day, new suppliers appear, some boasting nothing but a Gmail address and a mobile phone number for traceability. Many of these companies have a very generic website, full of stock images, boasting

multi-million-dollar sales across global locations – just like AOG Technics did.

World Aero is an MRO, not a parts trader; we're generally repairing rather than selling. Many say our product is wheels and brakes, but I argue that our product is a release certificate – a piece of paper that transforms a collection of nuts, bolts, bearings and aluminium into an airworthy assembly capable of helping to transport hundreds of people safely around the world. So naturally, we're very proud and protective of our product – our Form One, our 8130-3.

So, what's being done to stop another AOG Technics story happening again? The willingness to send copies of release certificates, trace and non-incident statements to anyone that asks astounds me. If you feel you must share certificates, redact them – hide signatures, names and other pertinent details. Who are you sending them to? Is it really going to make the deal happen?

How many times have you quoted a customer, sent copy certs and received no response – let alone an order? And please, don't post them on LinkedIn – as I write, I've just seen a post featuring certs for a turbine wheel – the exact type of component at the heart of the AOG Technics scandal.

We're all in the industry to make a living, but let's all be responsible to each other as well as the fare-paying passenger. 🍷



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