

Thursday, June 25, 2009

Update on the 787 problem

The Flightblogger posted an update to the structural issues with the 787: On the inboard side of the wing box where the 17 stringers end and connect to the center wing box, each has what is known as a 'stringer cap' that widens at the end and actually makes the hard connection between Section 11 and Section 12 on the side of body. The stringer caps on ZY997 sustained damage, albeit repairable, when the wings were flexed in late May.

Boeing confirms that small areas of the wing structure separated or "disbonded" from the wing skin, though declined to specify exactly where. Sources directly familiar with the situation say the shifting tension load from the stringer to fastener head also caused damage on the structure. It's really strange, that the Flightblogger compares the ruptured wing of the A380 at 147 percent load with the problem with 787 with a wing sustaining damage at 120-130%.

Ben Sandiland wrote some good comments in his blogs about the current situation. There are some really good quotes about the problems. In one article he commented about the Boeing comments in a sarcastic way: Boeing has a new definition of wing. It is ?side of airplane?.

This means it wasn't really the wing that was starting to break two months ago under static testing, it was just the side of the Dreamliner. Easily fixed. Could have flown on time. Nothing to worry about. (Qantas review of 787 program moving toward conclusion) In an other blog article he writes about the possible impacts to the program: Last night Plane Talking received confirmation that the fault Boeing discovered in April cannot be patched as easily as suggested by the company without testing that establishes beyond doubt that once patched weaknesses will not appear further out toward the middle wing and wing tip areas.

This issue, so lightly air brushed by Boeing when it cancelled the first flight, is turning into a very large question mark over the future direction and timing of the program. (Dreamliner ?Neverliner? bonanza for Airbus-up to 12 more A330s for Jetstar, maybe.) This sounds somehow reasonable as this matches my personal experience - when you repair something and reinforce it, it breaks left or right of the last break, perhaps just at a slightly higher load. And this is valid for wooden bedframes, bones, ...

Posted by Joerg Moellenkamp in Aviation, English at 08:06

Anybody knows the scheduled first flight date of the Airbus 350 ?

Could be getting close now.

Anonymous on Jun 25 2009, 11:14