



Mechanics at the engine build-up shop at GSO recently performed the first Boeing 767-200 engine change. Jimmy Allred, engine shop supervisor, oversaw the operation and Charlie King, maintenance manager-CLT, provided technical advice on the procedures for changing the engine. The CF6-80C2 engine which powers the B767-200 produces 52,000 pounds of thrust and weighs 10,800 pounds. According to both Allred and King, the operation went smoothly and according to schedule, a credit to the teamwork and professionalism of the employees involved in the operation. Mechanics and other personnel involved were (l to r): Randy Sharpe, Bruce DeHanes, Tim Smith, Kevin Bodenheimer, Jimmy Allred, Dennis Young, Ken Fusselman, Jeff Roberts, Charlie King, and Don Kinsella. Seated in front is Bill Forsythe. Not pictured were Jim Raper, Jeff Fischer, Bill Kirkman, Joe Herrin, Rick Chitty, and Bill Nixon.

'Go get 'em' attitude improves OTP

The crew of an inbound Piedmont F28 had just called BWI operations to report a problem with their right aileron—the controlling surface on the wing that causes the aircraft to bank for a turn.

Almost instantly, a yellow flag went up behind the scenes, from maintenance to passenger services, at the hub and the home office. After all, depending on the magnitude of the problem, repairs of this sort could result in a 90-minute maintenance delay, or even a flight cancellation.

Contingency plans began to be hashed about: how long will it take a mechanic to troubleshoot and make the repair. . . are replacement parts in stock. . . how will the downline stations deal with the delay. . . at what point should arrangements be made to protect passengers. . . will crews need to be re-routed?

Bob Sivilich, line maintenance mechanic-BWI, is seated at a microfilm viewer, calmly spinning through to the appropriate systems diagrams. He received word of the F28 problem a few minutes ago. The repair of Flight 1851—and the fate of its eight downline legs—was now in his hands.

He knows well that a single delay in an aircraft routing at any given point has the potential to "snowball" into several subsequent delays down the line, at least until the aircraft is able to resume schedule. But more importantly, he knows that his primary role as a line maintenance mechanic is to assure the safe operation of this aircraft, and that outranks all other considerations.

Within moments, Sivilich is on the line with AOCC (Aircraft Operations Control Center) conferring with maintenance control on the technical aspects of the repair. Armed with an aileron power-control unit switch in one hand and the tools to install it in the other, Sivilich is ready and waiting at the gate even before the F28's engines finish spooling down.

"These are the kind of guys I like to equate with firemen," said Phil Coley, regional director-line maintenance, INT. "When the bell rings, they're putting out fires. And when they're waiting for the bell to ring, they're preparing themselves on

how best to put out fires or prevent them from happening in the first place."

According to Coley, Piedmont operates 25 line maintenance stations from London to Miami to Los Angeles, employing more than 810 maintenance people. This includes the aircraft mechanics, ground service equipment mechanics and aircraft cleaners.

"These are the people out in the field who meet every aircraft that lands with a problem. They're out there checking all the log books, fixing all the 'squawks,' and making the equipment look good and run safely," Coley said.

"But our main goal is to provide a safe, on-time, reliable operation."

Sivilich's prompt and accurate analysis of the malfunctioning aileron switch, and his expertise in safely repairing the problem, allowed for Flight 1851 to proceed within 20 minutes of its scheduled departure from BWI. Coley says the report on the delay read like a textbook case study. Exceptional communications, quick response to a problem, and an outstanding savings in time.

"It's the type of people we have out there, the type with that 'go get 'em' attitude," Coley said. "We're very fortunate. We have some of the most productive maintenance employees in the airline industry. Of course I'm kind of partial. But our record speaks for itself."

And speak it does. Last month, Piedmont reported one of its best days in terms of maintenance reliability for all fleet types (the percentage of aircraft that operated with no mechanical interruption). The B737-200 on that day was 98.8 percent—and that's the low end of the scale. The F28 reliability factor was 99.5 and the B767 operated with 100 percent reliability.

"We operate in the neighborhood of 1,400 flights per day and yesterday we had only nine maintenance delays. Even for us, that's an impeccable day," Coley said. Typically, the company averages 14 to 16 maintenance delays each day.

Coley also noted that Piedmont recorded just 12 MELs on one particular day in October out of its fleet of 193 aircraft. "Now, that is the best ratio in the industry," he said.



Line maintenance mechanic Bob Sivilich performs maintenance on a F28 at BWI.

The MEL (Minimum Equipment List) is an FAA approved list of certain aircraft components and systems that are not vital to the safe operation of the aircraft. For example, if there is a problem during the day with a landing light or one of the numerous generators on board, and the item appears on the aircraft's MEL list, the aircraft is considered airworthy and may be utilized until the problem can be

addressed downline or at an overnight maintenance station.

"At Piedmont, we utilize the MEL for its stated purpose," said George Mason, vice president maintenance and engineering. "But, we also believe that the MEL is a measure of our relative health as an organization."

"The line maintenance activities to clear MELs are one element of a network that focuses daily in resolving discrepancies. That network includes maintenance planning, maintenance control, parts provisioning and parts movement, maintenance training and even heavy maintenance," Mason said.

"Our success is attributable to the fact that we all march to the beat of the same drummer."

Coley says that if our people do their job right, which includes preventative inspections and maintenance as well as on-the-spot repairs, then line maintenance should not be considered a major factor in the company's daily on-time performance effort.

"But, if we were to look at maintenance as a burden, then we account for less than 1.8 percent of all delays," Coley said. "And that speaks pretty highly of our equipment and the ability of our people to keep them operating safely and on time."

system performance

October performance:
Departure 90% OT; Arrival 83% OT

As we near the end of the year, where do we stand on our annual goals? Departures are at 85% (right on target) and arrivals are 78% (two points off). We are slightly ahead of 1987 and very close to achieving the best performance year on record. By maintaining our current departure performance trend for the next two months we will have half of the pie. The other half is going to be a little more difficult to accomplish but by departing on time we minimize the outside stimuli (air traffic control, weather, etc.) that affect our arrival performance.

November and December are historically the "toughest" performance months for Piedmont and the rest of the industry. Although this sounds contradictory to the above paragraph it's just to let you know what we're up against in the next two months.

We encourage all employees to continue their proven commitment to a safe on-time operation during the busy Thanksgiving and Christmas season!

