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Aircraft damaged in hit and run incident

Two British Airways ground staff were arrested on suspicion of damaging a parked plane with a small electric-powered baggage truck and then failing to report the incident, the airline and police said on Wednesday. BA said two its members of staff had been put on a precautionary suspension while detectives carried out an investigation.

The men, aged 54 and 49, were held last Friday morning at London's Heathrow Airport after damage was discovered to the fuselage of the plane just before takeoff with 80 passengers on board. The men have jeopardized careers which total 40 years between them.

Media reports said the plane, an Airbus A321 bound for Aberdeen in Scotland with 80 passengers, had been **left with a gash** and that the workers responsible had failed to report the incident. A spokeswoman declined to say how badly damaged the plane had been and how its safety might have been affected.

Damage to the hull of an airliner is **much more than a cosmetic nuisance**. In the US in 2007, a Northwest Airlines DC-9 and an Alaska Airlines MD-80 both suffered rapid depressurization incidents, at 19,000 and 26,000 feet respectively, when their fuselages ruptured at spots damaged by ground vehicle strikes which had gone unreported.

First Flights from Baghdad to the EU

The first flight from Iraq to the EU in 17 years takes place today. Swedish company Nordic Leisure is launching a once weekly non-stop from Copenhagen to Baghdad with an MD-80. This come just before Iraqi Airways announces it is drawing plans in conjunction with Air France-KLM to begin flight to Europe with in coming year. Other international arrivals are expected in Baghdad.



Northrop Grumman Sued Over Mallard Crash

It's not often that a manufacturer is sued for allegedly defective products it hasn't built in almost 60 years but that's where Northrop Grumman finds itself. Chalk's Ocean Airways and its



insurer AIG is suing the company over the crash of one of Chalk's Grumman Mallards in December of 2005, claiming the 58-year-old aircraft wasn't properly made. "There was a manufacturing problem with the rivets," Chalk's attorney John Eversole [told the Miami Herald](#). "Our allegations are that there was a weak area where the wings are attached to the fuselage, an area that could lead to weakness if under stress. This area is enclosed and cannot be inspected. The metal is built around the area where this wing sheared off..." The right wing on Chalk's Mallard came off in flight and the resulting crash killed all 20 aboard. The Herald said Northrop Grumman declined comment on the suit.

Chalk's never recovered from the accident and its operating certificate was pulled in November of 2007. AIG paid out \$50 million in claims. The NTSB blamed **faulty maintenance and Chalk's failure to spot the fatigue cracks** that caused the accident but Eversole said there was nothing anyone could have done to spot the problem. "We think the NTSB was way too quick to blame Chalk's for maintenance when there is no maintenance that can be done with this area," he said. "You can't inspect it, you can't perform maintenance on it. There is nothing you can do short of rebuilding the airplane."

Military Controller's Trial A Lesson In Tea Totaling

Two days after the July 4 weekend, an air traffic controller at Mayport Naval Station, Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Sean Lee, was given a drug test that he failed, but his character and explanation saved his career. During the trial, Lee said that he was incredulous upon hearing the news that he'd failed the test. "That's not possible," he said, "that's impossible." Lee said during trial that he was a big tea drinker and had been contacted just days before hearing about his failed drug test by fellow petty officer second class Javier Trevino who'd already learned that he'd failed his own. The key connection between the two men was the tea they'd enjoyed tea together, supplied by Trevino, prior to the drug test. **The tea is known as mate de coca** and is made with the leaves of the coca plant ... the one from which cocaine is made. It can be bought in a "decocainized" U.S. legal form (though it does not appear that was the version the men drank) but even that product contains a minute quantity of the drug. Prosecutors argued that Lee should have known what he was drinking, but when asked at trial by his own attorney if he knew the ingredients of the green tea he usually drank, Lee reportedly responded, "uh ... tea?" Lee was acquitted, Tuesday.



Lee's proclaimed ignorance of the tea's ingredients was not his only defense. Lee's pregnant wife had also tried some of the tea and that fact, combined with positive testimony in which superior officers described Lee as the best petty officer second class in his unit and possible officer material appears to have been enough to sway the trial's outcome. Lee said he had been considering leaving the military, but said the court experience renewed his faith in the system and the Navy and he may now consider his chances of becoming an officer.

ANZ A320 pitched up and stalled before crash:

The probe into the November crash of an Air New Zealand (ANZ) Airbus A320 in France is focusing on an apparent surge of engine power during the final approach which caused the aircraft to pitch up and stall.

Head of the investigation, Jean-Pierre Dreno, told New Zealand's TV3 television that the cockpit crew were struggling to control the A320 during its final approach to Perpignan before the aircraft crashed into the Mediterranean Sea.

Describing the final seconds of the flight, Dreno said data retrieved from the flight data recorder (FDR) showed the aircraft first pitched up suddenly before it fell "on its side" into the sea. He said it all happened "very quickly".

Dreno also revealed that the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) captured sounds from the crew in the final moments of the flight, adding of the pilots that "they screamed".

The aircraft crashed on 27 November as it was coming in for a landing after carrying out a pre-delivery test flight. ANZ was preparing to take the aircraft back off lease from Germany's XL Airways and the crash killed all seven people on board including five New Zealanders.

French investigators initially found they were not able to retrieve data from the CVR or FDR but the manufacturer Honeywell was able to successfully retrieve the data earlier this month.

The French Bureau d'Enquetes et d'Analyses (BEA) began analysing information from the devices last week.

ANZ is cautioning, however, that French authorities "still do not know the cause of the A320 accident".

CEO Rob Fyfe says he met with chief prosecutor Dreno yesterday to seek an update on the investigation and "he made it quite clear to me that there are several more weeks of detailed analysis required before the investigating team has a clear idea of a likely cause".

Fyfe adds: "He reiterated his comments over the weekend that investigators are clear on the flight path and the fact that power was applied to the aircraft's engines but how or why is not known at this stage, and that he is concerned by speculation fuelled by media reports."

Passenger Opens Emergency Door on Delta Flight

PHOENIX — A man is in custody after opening an emergency door on a Delta Air Lines flight that landed at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport Tuesday afternoon.

Police spokesman Sgt. Tommy Thompson says the 37-year-old man arrived in Phoenix from Salt Lake City about 4:30 p.m.

Thompson says the flight taxied into the gate at Sky Harbor Terminal 3. As people were getting off the plane, the man opened an emergency door and walked out on the plane's wing. The man was later detained by runway personnel until police arrived.

Police and federal authorities questioned the man. Thompson says charges are pending.

HEMS Crash Documents Reveal Varied, Complex Causes

Not surprisingly, there is no “magic bullet” solution to the spate of fatal helicopter emergency medical service (HEMS) crashes over the last two years.

Rather, investigation documents, released by the NTSB late last week, reveal a **complex mosaic of multi-level human and technology failures behind nine** of these crashes in the past two years.

Page upon page of interviews, transcripts and forms unveil myriad indirect and direct causes, including “helicopter shopping” by dispatchers—when one HEMS company rejected a flight, generally due to weather, they kept dialing until another operator accepted the flight.

Other factors include pilots assigned, or voluntarily taking, excessive duty time; pilots flying into marginal weather or below safe performance envelopes; a pilot flying injured; and, in at least one case, a pilot with a vision restriction apparently flying without wearing his glasses.

Organizational problems also loom large as at least contributory factors: morale problems; high personnel turnover; **maintenance issues**; old equipment; failure to install modern safety enhancements such as TCAS, TAWS and NVGs; and instrument-rated pilots flying IFR-equipped helicopters, but not being allowed to fly IFR under the terms of the operator’s Part 135 certificate.

Incident: Comair CRJ2 at Montreal on Jan 14th 2009, flaps failure

- The crew of a Comair Canadair CRJ-200, registration **N807CA** performing flight OH-1460/DL-6460 from New York JFK, NY (USA) to Montreal, QC (Canada) with 40 people on board, reported flaps problems while on approach to Montreal and aborted the approach. The crew declared emergency three minutes later and landed their airplane safely on runway 24R 11 minutes later.

The Canadian TSB reported, that the flaps failed at 0 degrees. The crew worked the according checklists, then performed a normal landing. Maintenance reset the flaps and checked the flaps drive unit. The airplane was ferried to Cincinnati, OH for maintenance.

- The crew of a Comair Canadair CRJ-200, registration **N931CA** performing flight OH-1654/DL-6654 from Cincinnati, OH (USA) to Montreal, QC (Canada) with 13 people on board, reported problems with parts and executed a missed approach. The

crew declared emergency 10 minutes later and performed a second approach for a safe landing on runway 24R another 11 minutes later.

The Canadian TSB reported, that the crew had received a flaps fail message, when they selected flaps. The flaps failed at 0 degrees. The flaps were reset, a visual inspection and operational tests performed and the flaps set to 8 degrees for a ferry flight to Cincinnati, Comair's maintenance base.

- The crew of a Pinnacle Airlines Canadair CRJ-200, registration **N825AY** performing flight 9E-2881 from Detroit,MI (USA) to Ottawa,ON (Canada) with 42 people on board, reported flaps problem while on approach to Ottawa and subsequently declared emergency. The crew managed a safe landing 16 minutes later.

The Canadian TSB reported, that the flaps remained at 0 degrees, when flaps 8 were selected. The airplane had been de-iced to remove light snow prior to departure from Detroit. The airplane was ferried to Pinnacle's maintenance base, as this was a repeat flaps failure on the aircraft.

[Airbus warning hints at possible causes of Air NZ crash](#)

A safety warning issued by aircraft manufacturer Airbus is hinting at possible causes for November's Air New Zealand crash in France.

Although the bulletin stresses Airbus is not prejudging a formal investigation outcome, it makes two specific recommendations.

The first is that during painting of an aircraft care should be taken that key sensors are not painted over.

The second warns that low-speed tests must be performed at a safe altitude.

The Air New Zealand French manufactured Airbus A320 had been under charter to a German firm. It was taken to Perpignan in southern France where it was re-painted into Air New Zealand livery by EAS Industries.

On November 27, two German pilots, four Air New Zealand officers and a New Zealand aviation inspector flew the plane out of Perpignan and over the nearby Mediterranean Sea.

For as yet unexplained reasons, the plane suddenly plunged into the sea without being able to send out a distress call. No one survived the crash.

Airbus said in their bulletin that as a result of preliminary work and in line with international treaties, "without prejudging from the outcome of the investigation, Airbus wishes to remind... all (A320) operators" of its maintenance guidance.

"During all maintenance or painting actions, comply with the published ... procedures, in particular concerning the protection of all aerodynamic data sensors."

Its second recommendation was that check flights – such as Air New Zealand flew out of Perpignan – "must be performed in compliance with flight order within the Certified Flight Envelope. In particular tests such as low-speed test must be performed at safe altitude and be preceded by a recall of basic rules as regards to minimum speeds and recovery actions."

The notice was signed by Airbus vice president for flight safety, Yannick Malinge.

Air New Zealand said in a statement it welcomed the bulletin.

Air New Zealand Chief Executive Officer Rob Fyfe said it already follows the recommendations outlined in the Airbus bulletin and has not previously experienced any issues in relation to either of the requirements outlined.

"The bulletin from Airbus is a precautionary measure intended to remind operators of existing manufacturer recommendations. Safety is paramount and non negotiable for Air New Zealand and it is part of our normal operating procedures to always adhere to all manufacturer directives," Mr Fyfe said.

"It is important and appropriate that Airbus issue this update, however it is just as important, as Airbus themselves state, that this information should not be taken as a pre-judgement of the outcome of the official investigations."

The Air New Zealand crash investigation is being closely watched by the aviation world because the A320, along with the Boeing 737, is the backbone of the commuter industry

British Coastguard Crews Must Complete Readiness Forms Before Rescues

"Hold On... Can't Go Yet... May I Borrow A Pen?"

Britain's 400 affected coastguard units now face time-consuming paperwork before they're allowed to take their specially-equipped Land Rovers out on distress calls.

The Daily Mail reports the 'vehicle pre-journey risk assessment' forms include four questions about the nature of the mission; an explanation of the reason for the journey; details of any risks involved, including current and forecast weather; and planned steps to mitigate risks. A leader must then answer a yes/no question about whether the risk is acceptable.

As might be imagined, the 3,200 rescue workers affected are outraged at the latest in what's being called a string of health and safety rulings recently issued by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, which also employs a fleet of search-and-rescue aircraft.



One coastguard commented, "When we were first told about this, we simply couldn't believe it. When we get a call asking us to go out and rescue someone, we need to go there without delay... **do they expect us to get a full weather forecast before we go out?**"

"The impression we get is that the bosses are doing everything they can to make sure their hands are legally clean if there is any kind of problem."

This isn't the first recent case of red-tape-gone-wild. In November, the Department for Transport told coastguards they must start using torches for nighttime search and rescue, because flares might injure someone.

The Mail reports that in August, a three-man coastguard crew from Devon was disciplined because they rescued a 13-year-old girl 150 yards off shore using a boat that had not been passed by health and safety officials.