

PRESS RELEASE

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BLAST CABINETS UPGRADE AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

Two custom-designed blast cabinets from Hodge Clemco have upgraded surface preparation processes on a wide range of aircraft components at Kearsley Airways Ltd, one of the UK's leading companies in the aerospace component repair sector.

Kearsley Airways has operated aircraft repair and maintenance services for over 60 years and currently works in support of both civil and military aircraft including the Lockheed C-130 Hercules, Boeing 737 and 747 and heritage aircraft such as the Spitfire, Hurricane and Lancaster. Components and systems processed include under-carriages, wheels, electrical units, air-conditioning systems and hydraulic actuators.

Under-carriage systems arriving for overhaul have to be assessed for any degradation, including pitting, corrosion and distortion. Inspection follows the removal of the existing surface finish in the Hodge Clemco pressure blast cabinets, which provide high work-rates, close control of abrasive output and convenient operation for staff. Well-illuminated work chambers measuring 1500mm wide x 1500mm deep x and 1000mm high include rotating work-tables that can carry loads up to 250kg. The work-tables run on tracks that extend outside the chambers for convenient loading and unloading.

Staff handle the blast guns and turntables through sealed glove ports, using a foot-valve to turn abrasive flow on and off, with air pressure being controlled accurately and easily by a dial-type regulator. Plastic bead or crushed walnut shell media are generally used to avoid damaging the sub-surface of the components, and a re-grading unit returns re-usable media to a storage hopper on the blast machine. Excellent visibility has been achieved for operators by optimising the ventilation

systems, which feed exhaust air through reverse-pulse dust extractors with automatic cartridge cleaning.