

# AGARD

ADVISORY GROUP FOR AEROSPACE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

7 RUE ANCELLE, 92200 NEUILLY-SUR-SEINE, FRANCE

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**AGARD ADVISORY REPORT 353**

## **Aluminum Alloy Forgings Property/Performance Attributes**

Focus: Fatigue and Durability Service Capabilities

(les Pièces forgées en alliage d'aluminium  
les attributs de performance/caractéristiques

thèmes: fatigue et durabilité capacités en service)



North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
*Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord*

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- Providing scientific and technical advice and assistance to the Military Committee in the field of aerospace research and development (with particular regard to its military application);
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<b>14. Abstract</b>																			
<p>Historically, many aluminum aircraft components have been made from forgings. However, to reduce airframe manufacturing cost aircraft manufacturers are converting to parts machined from thick plate. The results of recent research indicates that forgings often offer significant advantages over components machined from plate. The purpose of this report is to present this information.</p>																			

# **Aluminum Alloy Forgings**

## **(AGARD AR-353)**

### **Executive Summary**

Primary airframe components are designed to specific static and dynamic loading requirements and other functional criteria. The airworthiness of an aircraft requires fulfilling all the operational requirements with the additional assurance that safety-of-flight and serviceability will be maintained in the event of unforeseen structural damage.<sup>1-3</sup> Airworthiness validation procedures have their foundation in durability and damage tolerance assessment technologies, that are in turn linked to airplane safety and mission objectives.<sup>4-8</sup> As aircraft life expectations continue to rise as a result of declining replacement budgets, the likelihood exists that incidence of fatigue cracking (possibly exacerbated by corrosion) will become more widespread.<sup>9</sup> Thus, engineers responsible for the design, certification and maintenance of longer-lived aircraft (both existing and new) will be increasingly challenged to provide effective strategies that curtail onset of widespread cracking, and mitigate the risk of it becoming a threat to safety and operational efficiency.<sup>5,9</sup>

Growth in size of aircraft and pressures to reduce airframe manufacturing cost have resulted in a trend to replace built-up assemblies with thick, monolithic components. Hand and closed-die forgings and thick plate are high strength aluminum product forms competing for a number of these part applications. Airframe manufacturers are converting parts historically made from forgings to thick plate “hogouts” to reduce manufacturing costs. However, available research and understanding of high strength aluminum alloy process-microstructure-performance relationships combined with advanced manufacturing technologies under development for forgings show that forgings offer distinct advantages over plate “hogouts” in terms of structural airworthiness needs.

This document demonstrates that excellent durability and damage tolerance capabilities emerge directly from the forged products’ microstructure and fabrication history. Data and examples are provided to show how high strength aluminum (7050-T7X, et.al.) forgings can be differentiated as a high quality product that can create a user preference. Advantages of forgings relevant to industry drives for longer life, higher performance and lower total cost of ownership are presented, and needed actions to realize the optimal value of forgings are defined.

N.B. The references are found on page 15 of the document.

# **Les pièces forgées en alliage d'aluminium**

## **(AGARD AR-353)**

### **Synthèse**

Les composants élémentaires des cellules d'avion sont étudiés en fonction de spécifications précises en matière de charges statiques et dynamiques, ainsi que d'un certain nombre d'autres critères fonctionnels. Pour être considéré comme apte au vol, un aéronef doit satisfaire à l'ensemble des besoins opérationnels. En outre, la sécurité en vol et l'aptitude au service doivent être assurés en cas d'endommagement imprévu de la structure.<sup>1-3</sup>

Les procédures de validation de l'aptitude au vol sont basées sur les technologies de longévité et d'évaluation de la tolérance aux dommages subis, lesquels sont, à leur tour, liés aux objectifs opérationnels et à la sécurité des vols.<sup>4-8</sup> La durée de vie utile des aéronefs continue à croître en raison de la diminution des budgets consacrés au renouvellement du parc aérien et il est vraisemblable que l'incidence des fissures de fatigue (éventuellement exacerbée par la corrosion) se généralise de plus en plus.<sup>9</sup> Par conséquent, les ingénieurs responsables de la conception, la certification et la maintenance d'aéronefs dont la durée de vie doit être prolongée (neufs et existants), seront de plus en plus mis au défi de prévoir des stratégies qui permettent d'atténuer le phénomène de la fissuration généralisée, et de réduire le risque qu'il représente pour la sécurité et l'efficacité des missions.<sup>5,9</sup>

L'augmentation de la taille des avions et les contraintes imposées par le souci de diminution des coûts de fabrication des cellules, expliquent la tendance qui consiste à remplacer les systèmes assemblés par des composants épais d'une seule pièce. Les pièces forgées à la main ou à matrice fermée, ainsi que la tôle forte, sont des produits en aluminium à haute résistance adaptés pour ces applications. Aujourd'hui, les avionneurs remplacent les pièces forgées traditionnelles par des pièces en tôle forte afin de réduire les coûts de fabrication. Cependant, l'état actuel des connaissances de l'interaction procédés/microstructures/performances des alliages d'aluminium à haute résistance, associée aux technologies avancées de fabrication qui sont en cours de développement pour les pièces forgées, indique que les pièces forgées offrent des avantages appréciables par rapport aux solutions à tôle forte du point de vue de la résistance des structures.

Ce document démontre que l'excellence en matière de longévité et de tolérance aux dommages subis découle directement de la microstructure forgée et de la nature de leur fabrication. Des données et des exemples relatifs aux pièces forgées en aluminium à haute résistance (7050-T7X et al.) servent à confirmer l'accueil favorable qui pourrait être réservé à ces produits de haute qualité par les avionneurs. Les avantages des pièces forgées, face aux attentes des industriels concernant l'extension de la durée de vie des composants, l'accroissement des performances et la diminution des coûts globaux de possession sont présentés, et les actions permettant de réaliser des pièces forgées de qualité optimale sont définies.

N.B. Les références se trouvent à la page 15 du document.