PRESS RELEASE

The delivery of the 20,000th blade and 1,000th fan case for LEAP engines proves the industrial maturity of our Commercy plant

Inaugurated in 2014, the Safran Aéro Composites plant in Commercy, eastern France, celebrated the delivery of the 20,000th fan blade and 1,000th fan case for LEAP* engines in September. These key parts are made of a composite material using an innovative 3D-woven RTM (resin transfer molding) process. This milestone reflects the major role played by Commercy in the production ramp-up for this new-generation turbofan engine. We take a closer look with Olivier Briffaux, plant managing director.

What does this milestone represent for Commercy?

The delivery of the 20,000th blade and 1,000th case shows the industrial maturity of our plant, which was built to support the unprecedented ramp-up in LEAP production. A unique challenge in the aircraft industry, this ramp-up calls on all Safran Aircraft Engines production facilities, and more generally the company’s entire supply chain. Since the delivery of the first complete shipset of blades and the first case in 2016, Commercy has continuously adapted its production capacity to meet demand. This dynamic industrial performance also created an exceptional opportunity for our plant, since it raises us to the highest global standard and contributes to the upskilling of our teams.

What are the main drivers that boosted the plant to this rarified level of production?

Safran Aircraft Engines and Albany Engineered Composites have made an all-out commitment to reenergizing the regional economy. For example, they invested over two million euros in the Commercy aero-composites training center, supporting the training of people who will be recruited for these jobs in a high-tech growth sector, mainly concerning composite materials for aerospace. I am especially thinking of job fields for which there is strong demand, such as adhesive technicians for blades and cases made by Safran Aéro Composite, or weaving and injection technicians for Albany Safran Composites. To date, the center has trained over 200 students. In addition, Safran Aircraft Engines has formed partnerships with regional players such as the Regional Council, government employment agencies, apprenticeship training centers and various high schools, such as Loritz in Nancy, about 40 kilometers from the plant. These efforts have borne fruit, with about 90% of the graduates of these courses subsequently being hired by Safran Aéro Composite or Albany Safran Composites.

What are the major challenges coming up for Commercy?

The LEAP production rate will pass a new milestone next year, reaching an annual rate of 2,000 engines. Our production organization will have to take another step forward to deliver these products to our own customer, Safran Aircraft Engines’ final assembly line in Villaroche, while meeting cost, delivery time and performance objectives. We have to continue to refine our operations, as well as strengthening our production processes. To boost our industrial performance and competitiveness, we draw inspiration from the best practices at our sister plants, in Rochester, NH and Querétaro, which also make 3D-woven composite parts for the LEAP. Looking further ahead, Commercy will have to continue its digital transformation to support the digital continuity approach deployed for all participants in the overall production process.
Safran is an international high-technology group and tier-1 supplier of systems and equipment in the Aerospace and Defense markets. Operating worldwide, Safran has nearly 58,000 employees and generated sales of 15.8 billion euros in 2016. Working alone or in partnership, Safran holds world or European leadership positions in its core markets. Safran undertakes Research & Development programs to meet fast-changing market requirements, with total R&D expenditures of 1.7 billion euros in 2016. Safran is listed on the Euronext Paris stock exchange, and its share is part of the CAC 40 and Euro Stoxx 50 indices.

**Safran Aircraft Engines** designs, produces, sells, alone or in partnership, commercial and military aircraft engines offering world-class performance, reliability and environmental-friendliness. Through CFM International®, Safran Aircraft Engines is the world’s leading supplier of engines for short and medium-haul commercial jets.

*CFM is a 50/50 joint company between Safran Aircraft Engines and GE

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* The LEAP® engine is designed, developed and sold by Safran Aircraft Engines and GE through CFM International.