THE ANALYSIS OF CHOSEN TECHNOLOGICAL PARAMETERS 
IN THE PROCESS OF MANUFACTURING COMPONENTS 
OF LANDING GEAR OF STRUCTURAL POST AIRCRAFT

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Abstract

High quality of components used in constructions of Landing Gears forces the manufacturers to choose appropriate technologies in order to manufacture and control dimensions of particular details. It is especially difficult to predict how the elements of huge dimensions will act during heat treat and chemical processing. The changes in size and shape of the elements of suspension of STRUCTURAL POST aircraft are connected with hardening stresses. This requires accurate determining of allowance of final machining. The analysis of processing parameters and manufacturing of a precise component is possible with the use of high-tech coordinate measuring techniques based on touch and untouched measurements. The highest quality of machines used in manufacturing and measuring as well as innovative technologies used during the process of manufacturing STRUCTURAL POST components result in effects assumed by the designing engineer. The aim of this article is to present issues connected with technological process of manufacturing STRUCTURAL POST components as well as the analysis of particular parameters of manufacturing process which have an impact on the accuracy of dimensions and shape of the final product. These parameters are also responsible for functionality, operational reliability and safety of the Landing Gear.

Keywords: transport, aviation, landing gear, measuring method, engineering

1. Introduction

The production process of elements of STRUCTURAL POST type begins with making a steel forged form in a foundry for further heat processing (in most cases it is steel 4340 300M). The construction of landing gear of an aircraft necessitates specific shape of the element which reminds a cylinder with protruding elements for mounting and it is difficult to manufacture (Fig. 1).

We can obtain a proper form thanks to different kinds of machining. During the production process about 80% of the forging’s material is removed. In general, the beginning of technological
The process can be divided into the following types of processing:
1. qualifying,
2. drilling,
3. profiling,
4. turning,
5. deburring,
6. in process inspection.

As a result, the manufactured element has a specific form together with initially assumed allowance material for final treatment. Thanks to the use of the latest technologies we get the assumed accuracy of dimensions, form and location [1]. Variable cross-section on the length and, what follows it, different time of cooling in later phase of heat treatment, has an impact on hardening stress and the change of the element’s dimensions. During the process of hardening elements undergo distortion and torsion. It also often happens that they become oval due to a specific shape of the elements: long bushing with thin walls thickness and clear passages into massive mounting lugs. Next, the element undergoes an arduous process of straightening and tempering so that the allowance material left for the final machining was enough to receive so called characteristic dimensions, which must be checked in the final element. We must not forget that during the production process of aviation elements it is necessary to follow proper aviation standards namely AS 9100 and AS 9102 (FAI) which require to carry out FA- 100% of measurements characteristic of the elements. The aim of these actions is to present an objective proof that all the requirements are explicitly understood, investigated and documented. Those standards force the manufacturers to create sections responsible for testing measurable key characteristics.

Straightening process, which is based on workers’ experience as well as on the working procedures after being repeated several times usually ends with obtaining a satisfying form of the element. Each straightening operation is connected with a measuring process [3]. In the diagram, the whole process can be described as follows:
1. hardening,
2. snap tempering,
3. distortion test after h/t,
4. temper hot straightening i,
5. distortion re-inspection,
6. temper hot straightening ii,
7. distortion re-inspection,
8. temper hot straightening iii,
9. final tempering,
10. hardness test,
11. mechanical properties check.
There is a need to work out a quick and accurate measuring method which does not suspend production process and provides with a defined dimensional accuracy of the dimensions, deviations in the form and location. At present measurements are usually taken with universal measuring tools and special devices adapted to particular types of elements based on center line fixture (Fig. 2), flat tapers, bench plates etc.

Therefore, a lot of new workstations should be created. Special appliances are expensive and they take a lot of space, proportionally to the size of the manufactured elements. While introducing new elements into production, new measuring devices are made, new workers are trained how to use them properly and new measuring procedures are worked out. The warehouse for measuring appliances is built. Tests conducted with Coordinate Measure Machine (CMM) produced the effect—the measurements were more accurate, at least of one level of precision [5-6].

CMM measurement is more universal and excludes the necessity of using numerous appliances. It is usually enough to have several basic, universal additional tools to use with it. Unfortunately, the measurement is connected with transfer of the element to the measuring machine room, tooling setup and checking particular dimensions which is effortful and causes significant extension of time of the operation (Fig. 4).
Adding a laser head to a Coordinate Measure Machine shortens the measuring time but, unfortunately, dampens the measuring accuracy (Fig. 4). There are also problems with reflection of light and checking internal dimensions/ID-inside diameters. Additionally, there still is a problem with transporting the parts to the measuring machine room.

Application of CMM, even in spite of their high accuracy, is insufficient regarding the needs. Thus, there is a need for more effective measuring methods retaining current precision of the measurements.
Analyzing the measurements presented above (Tab. 1) (Fig. 6), we can state that there are some slight discrepancies in the dimensions of the measured key characteristics but these discrepancies are within tolerance limits. This means that the applied measuring methods meet their objectives. However, the problems described earlier remain unsolved.

Conclusions

At present we can observe an intensive development of the untouched methods. Contrary to coordinate machines, it is possible to transport the optical system, which is important in case of the lack of possibility to transport an item. Systems based on untouched methods are more universal than Coordinate Measure Machines and have a wide range of application [7]. It is possible to use them not only for measuring the exact elements but also for measuring those of a bigger size. The elements that are modelled at the stage of construction, may serve as a model to compare with a map of points created with the use of the untouched method (Fig. 7) [2]. The process may concern the final product but it can also be used earlier, during process measurements.
The efficiency of the measuring process depends on the accuracy of the equipage of the measuring device but also on the knowledge and skills of the operator himself. The choice of a measuring strategy allows us to shorten the time of the measurements and to preserve or even improve the accuracy of the results of the measurements.

References