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COVER PHOTO
FBO Day at Cutter PHX during the 2025 King Air Gathering

King Air Inspection Programs

A phase is not an annual

by Dean Benedict

Last week I was at a shop doing a clinic on engine rigging with the maintenance technicians. Conveniently, there was a King Air in the shop with engine rigging issues, and everyone benefited from the hands-on experience. We also looked at the other King Airs in the shop. We discussed squawks that had been found and how best to troubleshoot and remedy them.

One King Air had a highly unusual maintenance background – somewhere between intermittent and non-existent. The owner acquired it eight or nine years ago. It was based in the western U.S. and made frequent trips to Mexico. Reportedly, at one point it flew for three years with zero maintenance! I've seen my share of airplanes that were parked for an extended period during which maintenance was deferred but to fly regularly for three years with no maintenance at all is just plain crazy.

They were finally getting all the maintenance caught up, so this King Air was on its third visit to that shop. I'm told the owner bought it from a buddy who told him "everything worked" on the airplane, and that was it. Clearly there was no pre-buy inspection. At the very least, I would have expected the new owner to think his newly acquired aircraft needed an annual inspection.

King Airs don't get "annual inspections"

I've worked with aircraft owners acquiring their first King Air for decades. Many are transitioning from the piston to the turbine world; therefore, they are firmly dialed in on the FAA-required annual inspection. And because some maintenance items on a King Air come due every 12 months, new King Air owners keep calling maintenance requirements "an annual."

It's just a nomenclature issue, but the difference is important. Normally I don't kick up a fuss about the proper term for this or that, but when it comes to "annual" versus "phase" it is a sticking point for me.

An annual inspection, as specified in FAR Part 43, is performed by a licensed aircraft mechanic, but it must be signed off by an authorized inspector (an A&P who also holds an inspection authorization certificate). IA certs must be renewed regularly.

The four phases

Phase inspections on a King Air are part of a factory-recommended program per 91.409(f)(3). An IA certificate is not required for the logbook sign-off. There are four phase inspection checklists, and all four must be

completed in a 24-month time span. Additionally, if a King Air does a lot of flying, a phase must be done every 200 hours (more on that later).

Each phase has a checklist of items to be inspected. The phases are *not* identical. Some basic inspection items are repeated at every phase, but each checklist has inspection items unique to that phase. All four phases must be done every two years to maintain airworthiness.

There are a variety of special inspections that also apply to the various King Air models. Compliance requirements can be hour-based, calendar-based or they may come due after a certain number of landings (cycles).

I have weaned many a new King Air owner off the "annual inspection" idea and got them thinking in terms of phase inspections, special inspections and tracking cycles in addition to hours.

The alternate phase inspection program

Most King Airs out there (Part 91, at least) are on the alternate phase inspection program. Phases 1 and 2 are done one year and phases 3 and 4 the next, and so on. Provided your average use stays around 16.5 hours/month or less, you qualify for this plan. The calendar requirement of all four phases in a 24-month period trumps the 200-hour requirement in this case. Since you're doing two phases every year, it may *seem* like an annual inspection on a piston aircraft, but it is not.

In addition to the phases being done, there are special inspections coming due at every phase inspection visit. Some of these are 12-month items such as the capacity check on the battery or the ELT (emergency locator transmitter) check per FAR 91.207(d).

Other special inspections come due every 24 months, such as your avionics check (the pitot-static and transponder checks, aka the 411/413). The engine nozzle clean and flow check is a 400-hour item. Special inspections of the landing gear are often cycle-based (1,000-cycle inspection of the main gear and nose gear clevis) or are a cycle/calendar combination (actuator end-play and lube at 1,000 cycles or 30 months, whichever comes first).

The 200-hour phase inspection program

High-use King Airs must do a phase every 200 hours. King Airs that fly around 33 hours/month or more fall into this category. At this use rate, a King Air could get all four phase inspections done, one at a time, in a 24-month period. Completion of the four phases every two years is a requirement for all King Airs, no matter how much or

how little they fly. When average use fluctuates between 17 and 32 hours/month (approximately), you have to keep an eye on that 24-month deadline and plan how to get all four phases done.

Here's an example with a King Air averaging 22 hours/month: They do a Phase 1 and fly 200 hours over the next nine months. They do a Phase 2 and fly another 200 hours over another nine months. Now they are 18 months into the 24-month period. There are six months left and phases 3 and 4 still need to be completed. They can do phase 3 now and put it down again after six months for the phase 4; or they can do the phase 3 plus the phase 4 right then and not have to put the aircraft down for another 200 hours. The 24-month parameter resets from that point. Either choice is correct but the latter saves downtime.

Why can't I do a phase 1-4 every other year?

You can! Beech calls it the biennial inspection program.

There are three requirements to be eligible for this program:

First, are you flying fewer than 200 hours in a 24-month period? That's an average of 8.5 hours per month or less. This program is for low-use King Airs.

The second requirement is an interim inspection at the 12-month mark in alternate years between the biennial phase 1-4. There's a checklist for it in the maintenance manual. Essentially, it's a thorough operational check on the aircraft. Of course, any discrepancies noted must be remedied.

The third requirement is a declaration in your logbooks that the aircraft is on the biennial inspection program. You can't go two years without a phase and then suddenly decide you are doing the biennial program.

I don't come across many King Airs on the biennial program, but when I do they are usually in bad shape. Often, the interim inspection hasn't been done or if it has, it's been pencil-whipped. Special inspections are ignored or glossed over. Too many owners think it's a Phase 1-4 every other year and little else. Following the biennial program *correctly* with interim inspections, special inspections, etc. doesn't save much money in the long run. I'm not a fan.

I've had many low-usage customers who could qualify for the biennial program, but they chose the alternate phase inspection program (two phases each year, completing all four phases in 24 months). When they go to fly their King Air, they want to have confidence in it. They prefer an airplane that is looked at regularly and thoroughly. The *less* they fly, the *more* they want this assurance.

Whatever inspection program you use should be declared in your logbooks.

Special inspections and MORE

Regardless of which inspection program your King Air is on, you can see that King Airs have quite a few components subject to special inspection, overhaul or replacement. For example, the hydrostatic test on the oxygen bottle is calendar-based, due at 36 or 60 months depending on your bottle. The instrument air filter replacement is hour-based at every 600 hours. Your starter generators need to be sent for overhaul every 1,000 hours. Replacement of the flap flex shaft is cycle-based, due every 5,000 cycles.

Likewise, major items like landing gear, props and engine maintenance are not covered by the phase checklists. If you have an engine on the MORE program, additional maintenance requirements are specified by that program. The MORE program (Maintenance On Reliable Engines) is a supplemental type certificate that comes with its own manual. Detailed checklists of engine maintenance items are included. It is very clear, and it all must be done.

STCs and your POH

King Airs have been around for a long time. There are lots of FAA-approved modifications and upgrades that can be done. Propellers can be changed (four-blade or swept-blade), engines can be changed (as in a Blackhawk conversion) and, of course, Raisbeck offers many performance-enhancing upgrades. All such modifications or STCs have operational and maintenance instructions that must be followed to maintain airworthiness.

They come with the STC paperwork and are known as the instructions for continued airworthiness, or the ICA. STCs, with their corresponding ICAs, are kept in the supplements section of the pilot operating handbook. This is a vital point! The airworthiness of your King Air depends on the applicable ICAs being followed. The ICA supersedes the maintenance manual and gives the pertinent maintenance requirements for that modification. If you put Commuter Air Technology's Soft Touch Tires on your King Air, don't look in the manual for tire pressures. Soft Touch Tires are STC'd so to service them correctly, check the ICA.

This is really important. Not every shop is familiar with King Airs. Time after time I find well-meaning mechanics following the maintenance manual without realizing the item they are working on is an STC modification with an ICA in the POH. The mechanic remains focused on the MM, unaware they are making incorrect settings or adjustments. On two separate occasions I had to condemn

a pair of four-blade props because the mechanics set the low idle improperly. They followed the MM, which applied to the three-blade props original to the aircraft. The four-blade props were an STC'd upgrade, and the proper low idle setting was in the ICA.

Maintenance tracking

Keeping track of these calendar, hour and cycle requirements may seem overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. When I had my shop, I tracked the maintenance status for King Airs that came to me on a regular basis. I developed a simple three-page form showing the required maintenance items, when they were last done (date, hours or cycles) and when they were next due (date, hours or cycles). At the end of every phase, I debriefed my customer on everything accomplished in that maintenance visit and gave them an updated status sheet. Customers loved it. Pilots flying multiple King Airs went home and made their own Excel spreadsheets for each King Air they flew.

Many shops do something along these lines for their regular customers. I did it at no charge, except for the first visit, which required extensive logbook study to ascertain the maintenance status of that King Air, and I charged a nominal fee for that.

There are, of course, maintenance tracking services and you'll find several to choose from. They research your logbooks for a baseline report and update it based on maintenance records you provide. Their reports are extensively detailed and can run 100 pages or more. These services are great for managing a flight department with multiple aircraft, but they may seem like overkill for a King Air owner/operator.

> "Regardless of which inspection program your King Air is on, you can see that King Airs have quite a few components subject to special inspection, overhaul or replacement."

You can hire a maintenance manager to keep track of what is coming due on your aircraft. I have done this. My customer (or their pilot) sends me the log entries from the last maintenance visit, I update the status report and I email it to the pilot before he plans the next one.

Bring the logbooks to maintenance

I can't emphasize this enough: Even if you return to the same shop every time, the mechanic needs your logbooks – and your POH – for reference. Inevitably, when the logbooks aren't there, something pops up during inspection and your mechanic needs to research something. It's Murphy's law. So please, please bring them.

In closing, remember this from FAR 91.403(a): "The owner or operator of an aircraft is primarily responsible for maintaining that aircraft in an airworthy condition …" Aircraft owners who are not pilots must take heed of this responsibility. Clearly, the owner of the King Air with no maintenance for three years was remiss. That said, I wish you many happy and safe hours in your King Air. KA

Dean Benedict is a certified A&P, AI with 50 years of experience in King Air maintenance. He was an inaugural inductee to the King Air Hall of Fame. He owned and ran Honest Air Inc., a Beechcraft maintenance boutique with a strong following of King Airs, for 15 years. Currently, with BeechMedic LLC, Dean and his wife, Lisa, consult with owners, pilots and mechanics on King Air maintenance issues, troubleshooting and pre-buys. Dean performs expert witness work on request. He can be reached at 702-524-4378 or via email at *dr.dean@beechmedic.com*.

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Aircraft Engine FOD:

How Insurance and the MORE Program Work Together

by Kyle White

Picture this: You're rolling down the runway in your King Air 350, the PT6 engines humming smoothly as you prepare to rotate. Suddenly, a wayward goose crosses your path and before you can react, it's sucked into the starboard engine. The cockpit lights up with warnings and your stomach drops – not just from the bird strike but from the looming question: Who's paying for this?

Foreign object damage is an ever-present risk for turboprop operators, and for King Airs powered by the ubiquitous Pratt & Whitney PT6 engines, the stakes are high. If you're enrolled in the MORE program – Maintenance On Reliable Engines – the answer lies at the intersection of maintenance coverage and your insurance policy.

Here's what every King Air owner needs to know when FOD strikes.

The FOD threat to the PT6

The PT6 engine is a marvel of aviation engineering; it's reliable, powerful and has been a cornerstone of the

King Air lineage since the 1960s. But its forward-facing inlet, designed to gulp air for those twin turbines, is also a magnet for trouble. FOD can come from anywhere: birds, runway gravel, ice chunks dislodged from the airframe or even a stray wrench left behind by a distracted mechanic.

The damage ranges from minor compressor blade nicks costing a few thousand dollars to repair to catastrophic failures requiring a full engine teardown and bills soaring past $200,000. For King Air operators who rely on these aircraft for everything from business trips to personal adventures, FOD can be a mechanical and financial headache.

Take a real-world example: In 2024, a King Air operator in Florida reported FOD. The PT6 was inspected and many blades were found damaged. The repair estimate was $103,000 plus weeks of downtime as rental engines are hard to find. For owners enrolled in the MORE program, such incidents raise a critical question: How does an engine past its original TBO avoid betterment deductions from the insurance adjustor or receive parts that are of equal value? Splitting this burden between the King Air owner and the insurance company becomes an art, not a science.

The MORE program: Maintenance meets FOD

It's not insurance, rather it's a proactive maintenance contract designed to keep your engine in peak condition through scheduled overhauls, parts replacement and discounted repairs.

The MORE program is a lifeline for PT6 operators. It's not insurance, it's a proactive maintenance contract designed to keep your engine in peak condition through scheduled overhauls, parts replacement and discounted repairs. Enrollment levels vary, from basic plans covering routine maintenance to comprehensive packages that include unscheduled events. But when it comes to FOD, the MORE program's role isn't always straightforward and can even complicate an insurance claim.

If your PT6 suffers FOD, the MORE program might cover repairs, but most likely this peril is referred to the insurance policy. Most standard MORE agreements focus on wear-and-tear or scheduled overhauls – think hot section inspections or turbine rebuilds – not sudden, external events like a bird strike. One King Air owner I spoke with learned this the hard way after a gravel

ingestion incident. His MORE plan covered a discounted bearing replacement during the next scheduled maintenance, but the immediate FOD repairs fell outside the plan's scope, leaving him to lean on his insurance.

This is where the program shines indirectly: meticulous maintenance records. The MORE program enforces strict documentation and regular inspections, which can prove invaluable when filing an insurance claim. If your PT6 is well-maintained under MORE, it's harder for an insurer to pin the damage on normal wear and tear, which can lead to a denied claim.

Insurance: The FOD safety net

For most King Air owners, hull insurance is the backbone of FOD protection. This coverage, typically bundled into an aviation policy, pays for physical damage to the aircraft – including engine repairs – minus a deductible and the depreciated value of the damaged part. If a flock of starlings turns your PT6 into a blender, your insurer will dispatch an adjuster, assess the wreckage and cut a check based on your policy terms. A typical claim might cover teardown costs, parts, labor and even loss-of-use expenses if your King Air is grounded for weeks.

But here's where the MORE program complicates things. Some experts will argue that a PT6 has no value once it hits 3,600 hours, while others feel the engine is just getting broken in and will last for thousands more hours if maintained properly. These two perspectives have a tremendous effect on how much your insurance company will pay for a FOD event. Take for example the $103,000 claim in Florida. Originally, an expert said that the engine was past the 3,600 TBO therefore insurance has no obligation to pay to repair the damage. The King Air owner felt he still had 12.5% life left on his engine time per the MORE program. This discussion needs to be had and a conclusion reached to determine if the insurance company will pay for any of the replacement parts and labor.

Once you have the insurance company understanding and agreeing to your perspective, you must negotiate how much they are going to pay for the parts. If new parts are installed and you only have 12.5% of the life left in the engine, that 12.5% is all the insurance company will want to pay. The other 87.5% is considered betterment – meaning you are better off after the claim than before because you have new parts. To avoid betterment and to keep the repair cost down, the insurance company will try to find used or refurbished parts. But in this post-COVID era, parts are hard to come by at times, and the insurance company will have no choice but to put new parts in the engine. That is their problem, not yours. You shouldn't be penalized because used parts are not available.

If your engine is enrolled, repairs might involve the MORE program and your insurer, creating a two-headed claims process. Say a bird strike damages your compressor and turbine blades. For example, under MORE you might get a discounted replacement part with the program covering 30% of the cost. Your insurance then steps in to pay the balance, minus your deductible, assuming the claim is approved. This synergy can save thousands but it requires coordination. Insurers may scrutinize MORE's contribution to avoid overpaying, while the MORE program won't touch repairs outside their contract's scope.

When going through the repair estimate, make sure you have good representation by your broker to be able to get as much of it paid for by the insurance company as possible. I've seen King Air owners leave a lot of money on the table. On the earlier referenced $103,000 claim, the insurance company originally only wanted to pay $68,000. After some back-and-forth on each line item, the insurance company ended up paying $85,000.

Flat-out denials are another risk. Insurers sometimes reject FOD claims if they suspect the event wasn't a one-time occurrence that requires immediate attention. The MORE program's rigorous upkeep standards can counter these arguments but only if your paperwork is airtight. One operator dodged a denial after a 2022 FOD incident by presenting MORE logs showing a clean inspection just days prior.

Navigating the fallout: Tips for King Air owners

So, how do you ensure FOD doesn't ground your King Air and your wallet for good? Here are practical steps:

- **Know your MORE contract:** Review your enrollment tier. Does it include unscheduled repairs like FOD? If not, plan to rely on insurance for the heavy lifting.
- **Check your policy:** Confirm your hull insurance covers FOD explicitly. Some policies carve out exceptions. Align your deductible with your risk tolerance. A $5,000 deductible might sting less than a $25,000 deductible after a major hit. Also, look for the betterment language or other similar wording where used parts are the go-to solution.
- **Act fast:** After a FOD event, notify your insurer and MORE coordinator immediately. Submit detailed logs – standard with MORE – to streamline the claim. Pictures with a borescope are critical too.
- **Mitigate risks:** Inspect runways for debris, use bird deterrents at home fields and double-check preflight for loose items near the inlet. Prevention beats any claim.

The bottom line

FOD to your PT6 isn't a question of if, but when. And when it happens, the interplay between the MORE program and your insurance policy determines your fate. The MORE program can soften the blow with discounted repairs and bulletproof documentation while insurance covers the lion's share of an unscheduled disaster. Together, they're a powerful duo, but only if you understand their limits and overlap.

"The MORE program enforces strict documentation and regular inspections, which can prove invaluable when filing an insurance claim. If your PT6 is well-maintained under MORE, it's harder for an insurer to pin the damage on normal wear and tear, which can lead to a denied claim."

For King Air operators, staying proactive – both in maintenance and policy management – is the key to keeping your wings in the air and your finances intact. Next time you hear that PT6 spool up, you'll know you're covered, no matter what the runway throws your way. KA

Kyle P. White, ATP & MEII, is an aviation insurance executive for a global insurance brokerage company. As a former professional King Air captain on BB-1118, he still enjoys flying his family's J-model Bonanza and Piper Cub. He can be reached at *kpwhite816@gmail.com*.

A failed 325a current limiter

Current Limiters ... Again

by Zach Cleaver

Current limiters: We talk about them and we test them. But what do they do for us, and how can we protect them?

Let's start with defining a current limiter. It's a device that restricts or limits electrical flow to a predetermined maximum amount that prevents damage to components.

The most talked about current limiters in King Airs are the 325 ampere limiters found in the dual-fed electrical system design (see Figure 1) so that's what we are going to focus on in this article.

What do the 325a current limiters protect? They control the amperage flowing between the isolation bus to the left main bus and the right main bus. The first time we check the current limiters is during our cockpit preflight checks. The battery is on and we press the button on our load meters to show the voltage to the left and right main buses. If the voltage reads battery volts, we know that our current limiters are intact. If one of the volt meters shows zero volts, the current limiter on that side has failed and will need to be replaced.

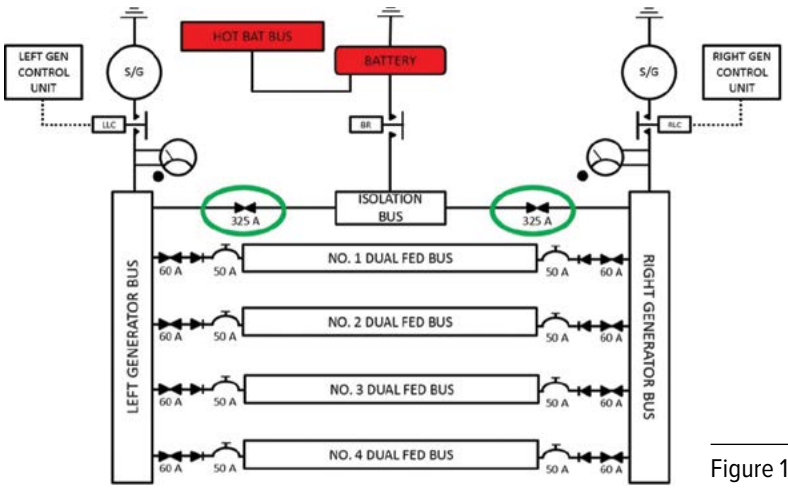


Figure 1

How can we protect 325a current limiters?

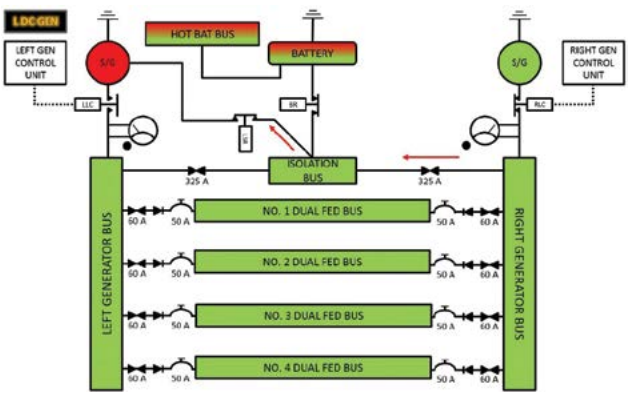
The time that the current limiters are most vulnerable to damage is during engine start. Let's look at how that happens.

The generator-assisted start that I will describe offers the best protection for your current limiters and can be used in any King Air. Newer King Airs (BB-1444 and newer) and triple-fed bus electrical system King Airs can perform a true cross-generator start without damaging the current limiters. Check your POH to make sure your plane is capable of the cross-generator start. If you have doubts, using the generator-assisted start technique will help keep your current limiters safe.

After completing your before-start checklist, go ahead and start your first engine. It does not matter which side unless you are in a 90, A90 or B90 with a supercharger on the left side. In those models, the right engine first is the way to go.

Once the first engine is started, most pilots bring the generator online to recharge the battery after the start (prior to BB-1444). Here is where the problem arises. When you turn on the second starter, it will ask for approximately 800a to get the engine turning from a dead stop. The electrical demand will reduce dramatically after the engine begins to turn. The problem is that the operating generator is going to produce quite a bit of that power and send it through the current limiter on its way to the isolation bus (see Figure 2). Remember that the current limiter was rated for 325a. Forgetting to turn the first generator off prior to initiating the second engine start will set you up for a failed current limiter.

Figure 2



Passing 800a through a 325a current limiter is possible but not ideal. The current limiter might be able to withstand that a time or two but eventually passing that much current through it will cause it to fail.

Now that we have used some power out of our battery, we have a choice to make. If you are happy with the max motoring N_1 speed you had on the first engine start (18% or so), then you can skip the battery recharge step and go straight into the second engine start. Hit the starter for the second engine and once N_1 reaches 12% or greater, bring the first engine's generator online. The generator will now assist in the starting of the second engine. I would expect to see 20% or greater N_1 for max motoring with the generator assisting. The second engine start will be significantly cooler than the first engine. Remember the faster N_1 is before you introduce fuel to the engine, the cooler the start will be. Alternating which engine starts first is a good way to even out wear and tear between the two engines.

With both engines running but only one generator online, we are going to do our second current limiter check. Press the button on your load meter again and check the volts on both. With one generator on and intact current limiters, you should see 28v on both volt meters. If you see 28v on one and 24v on the other, you have blown a current limiter during the start, most likely on the side that you started first. Time to shut it back down and get the failed current limiter replaced. Taking off in this condition is prohibited as you no longer have a dual-fed electrical system and the loss of one generator will cause other systems to fail with no means of restoring them in flight.

The third and last check of our current limiters is performed after shutdown but before we turn our battery off. With both generators offline, press the button on the load meters one last time. You should see 24v on both voltmeters. If one reads zero the current limiter on that side needs to be replaced before your next flight. If they both read 24v they are good and you can turn off the battery.

What about 60a current limiters?

The last set of current limiters we are going to talk about don't get much attention from pilots but they are a good thing to check once in a while. The current limiters I'm referring to are the 60a limiters between the dual-fed buses and the left and right generator buses (see Figure 3). The dual-fed buses are protected by 50a circuit breakers as well as 60a current limiters. The circuit breakers are located on the right-side CB panel in King Air 200 and B200s and the fuel CB panel under the fuel gauges. Circuit breakers are easy enough to see when the have popped but the current limiters are a little harder to tell when they have had a problem.

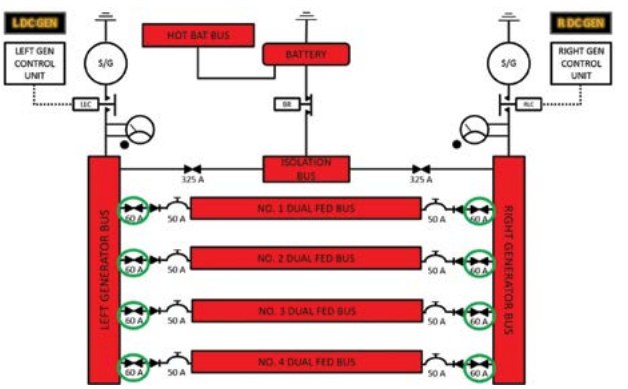


Figure 3

So, how do we check them? On the ground with battery power or with a ground power cart hooked up to the plane, we are going to pull the 50a circuit breakers one by one and see if we have any dual-fed bus failures with only one CB pulled.

Let's walk through the procedure using Dual Fed Bus #1 as an example. The CBs for Dual Fed Bus #1 are on the right-side CB panel, along with Dual Fed Bus #2 (Dual Fed Bus #3 & # 4 are on the fuel panel CB). First, turn on the battery; ground power helps but is not required. Pull one of the No. 1 CBs. Dual Fed Bus #1 items should still be powered; if not, the current limiter on the opposite side has failed. Assuming pulling the first CB has had no effect on Dual Fed Bus #1 items, pull the second No.1 CB on the right-side CB panel. All Dual Fed Bus #1 items should go dead, this verifies that the CBs are disconnecting power from the #1 bus. Third, reset the first Dual Fed Bus #1 CB and power should be restored to the #1 bus. If power is not restored the opposite side current limiter has failed and will need to be replaced. Repeat the process for the remaining three dual-fed buses to check all the 60a current limiters and CBs.

As you can see, protecting our current limiter during start is not a difficult thing to do. Using a generator-assist type start will protect the 325a current limiters in all dual-fed style King Airs. Occasionally checking the 60a current limiters protecting our dual-fed buses is a good way to check that our dual-fed buses are actually dual fed! KA

Zach Cleaver, a Gold Seal flight instructor since 2009, started teaching in King Airs in 2010. He has worked for King Air Academy in Phoenix, Arizona, since 2013 and flies all models of King Airs.

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King Air Hall of Fame 2025 Inductees

by MeLinda Schnyder

The 2025 King Air Hall of Fame induction ceremony took place during the King Air Gathering in Phoenix, Arizona, with both recipients and their families present.

The third class to be inducted since the HOF was introduced in 2022 is comprised of Jim Allmon and Ed Pardi, with each taking home a custom award made from a King Air propeller.

Ed Pardi
The flying King Air salesman

Ed Pardi (pronounced par die) graduated from high school in 1957 in Boulder, Colorado, and after finding college didn't suit him, his natural sales instincts landed him a job at a local Chevrolet dealership.

In 1961, his first full year of selling Chevys, he made $11,500. "My dad was only earning $6,500 and had spent several decades in his career, so I knew I was on to something with sales."

The dealership's used car sales manager changed Ed's life when in 1964 he asked the young salesman to partner with him on buying an airplane they could use for personal travel. Ed's first time in that 1947 Stinson 108, dubbed The Flying Station Wagon, was his first time ever off the ground in an airplane.

"I'd saved enough from selling cars and could afford to halve the $2,800 cost for that Stinson," he said. "I really wasn't that interested in flying or owning an airplane, but I was married by then and my wife thought it sounded like a great idea so we could fly to vacations and pancake breakfasts."

When it was time for the airplane's first annual under his ownership, the service shop's owner told Ed he should consider selling airplanes.

"He lied about how much I could make selling airplanes, and I lied about how great of a saleman I was," Ed recalled. "I went to work for the shop in Broomfield, Colorado, and it took me six months to sell the first one. It was a little Cessna 150 that sold for $2,100 and I made $25 commission. But I hung on because I was having so much fun flying the airplanes."

By the mid-1970s, Ed was hired by Bill Fry, the manager of Denver Beech, the Beechcraft distributor for the Colorado area. Ed showed an innate skill at selling Beech airplanes, especially the King Air series. In addition to great selling talent, Ed also became an excellent pilot, especially in King Airs and, later, Citations. For many years Ed was honored at the annual Beech factory sales meeting for his volume of sales.

Ed met his second wife at the Beechcraft Training Center at the factory in Wichita, Kansas. The two eventually moved to Las Vegas, Nevada, and then Scottsdale, Arizona, where Ed went out on his own as the owner of Aviation Sales International. Ed also became the pilot for an individual Citation II owner in Phoenix, and he made numerous Atlantic crossings either delivering or bringing back a King Air or Citation that he had sold.

Tom Clements presented Ed Pardi (right) with his Hall of Fame propeller.

"One of the things that set Ed apart as a salesman was that he flew the airplane," said Tom Clements, who presented the Hall of Fame award to Ed. "Rather than sit in the back of the airplane talking about financing, he was up front flying the King Air when he was selling them."

Ed's award read: *For the decades of excellence he has provided as a King Air salesman, both for Beech and on his own.*

Founders of Blackhawk (left to right): Jim Allmon, Lynnette Allmon, Matt Shieman and Dale Griffin.

Jim with daughter Lindsay Allmon, who is vice president of marketing for Blackhawk.

Jim Allmon
Revolutionizing King Air performance since 1999

Jim Allmon, a founding partner of Blackhawk Aerospace, was surprised during the March 21 induction ceremony when his name was called.

"It's hard for me to accept that I am worthy of this incredible honor," he told *King Air* magazine. "To be included with past honorees such as James Raisbeck, Tom Clements, Dean Benedict, Olive Ann Beech, the original engineers of the PT6 and the chief engineer for Beech who helped develop the King Air … it's such a mind-boggling thought. I can only say, I've always strived to support King Air owners and operators to help them unlock the full potential of the already-amazing aircraft. I feel that Blackhawk has achieved that goal."

Since founding Blackhawk in 1999, Jim has been a driving force in redefining what's possible for King Air aircraft. Jim's award read: *For your steadfast commitment to enhancing performance and extending the longevity of the renowned King Air turboprop, one of the most beloved and trusted aircraft in its class.*

With a deep understanding of performance and innovation, Jim began his journey by leading piston engine upgrades at RAM Aircraft. His expertise and hands-on experience as a high-time pilot gave him the insight to see untapped potential in the King Air platform. If upgraded engines worked wonders for Cessna 414s,

Beechcraft King Air Hall of Fame

Introduced at the 2022 King Air Gathering, this award was long overdue to honor those past and present who have been instrumental to building the Beechcraft King Air community. The selection committee considers whether possible honorees meet one of two criteria: Would the King Air have ever been made without the recipient and/or would the King Air have become the civilian aircraft with the longest production run in history without the recipient?

Past recipients in alphabetical order:

Olive Ann Beech (posthumously) – CEO of Beech Aircraft when the King Air was developed; she not only approved of but advocated for the King Air 90, which entered service in 1964

Dean Benedict – 50 years maintaining King Airs; a trusted consultant to King Air owners, pilots, managers, mechanics and readers of *King Air* magazine

Richard "Rich" Born – decades of contributions while selling King Airs and mentoring colleagues

Don Cary – spent 37 years in training and customer support roles at Beech Aircraft

LeRoy Clay (posthumously) – 45-year Beechcraft engineer and executive heavily involved with King Air development

Tom Clements – longtime King Air instructor, author of "The King Air Book" and "The King Air Book Volume II"

Bud Francis (posthumously) – spent many years as Beech's chief of Experimental Flight Test; he made the first flights of the Model 200 in 1972, Model 300 in 1981 and the Model 350 in September 1988

Tom Gillespie (posthumously) – Beech marketer who was a prominent advocate of the fledgling King Air program; he's credited with the vision of the turboprop future

Pratt and Whitney's PT6 Design Team (posthumously) – Gordon Hardy, Jim Rankin, Fernand Desrochers, Fred Glasspoole, Ken Elsworth, Allan Newland, Pete Peterson, Hugh Lanshur, Jean-Pierre Beauregard, Elvie Smith, Dick Guthrie and Thor Stephenson credited with developing Pratt & Whitney Canada's PT6 engine

James Raisbeck – founder of Raisbeck Engineering, known for performance-enhancing mods for the King Air family, including several incorporated into the production line

Raul "Rod" Rodriguez (posthumously) – earned accolades including the worldwide record holder for total King Air sales during 34 years at Beechcraft West

James D. "Jimmy" Webber (posthumously) – Beech's chief engineer of Experimental Flight; he was PIC on the first flight of the King Air on Jan. 24, 1964

he knew they could do even more for King Airs.

Jim forged a partnership with Pratt & Whitney, convincing them to supply engines for Blackhawk's transformative upgrades. Today, Blackhawk is the largest non-OEM buyer of Pratt & Whitney engines in the world. More than 1,500 operators now rely on Blackhawk-upgraded aircraft – including about 900 King Airs – experiencing unparalleled gains in safety, speed, efficiency and utility.

Jim has 11,000 hours total time, including nearly 1,000 hours in King Airs. Among his earliest King Air memories was flying LJ-1 to an event in Wichita where Olive Ann Beech was in attendance.

"Early in my career, I had the opportunity to fly the very first King Air ever produced – LJ-1," he recalled. "I was asked to fly the airplane to Beech Field in Wichita for an event. I had no idea what the event was for, I only knew to fly the airplane there. Upon arrival, there were a lot of media, even a band and, of course, Olive Ann Beech herself. I was treated like a celebrity even though I was the backup pilot, but I appreciated the history of the event. Olive Ann was very gracious."

Jim's legacy is one of elevating an already legendary aircraft to new heights, ensuring its continued relevance and reliability for generations to come. KA

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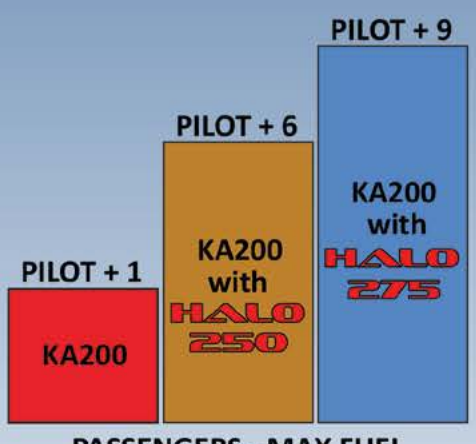

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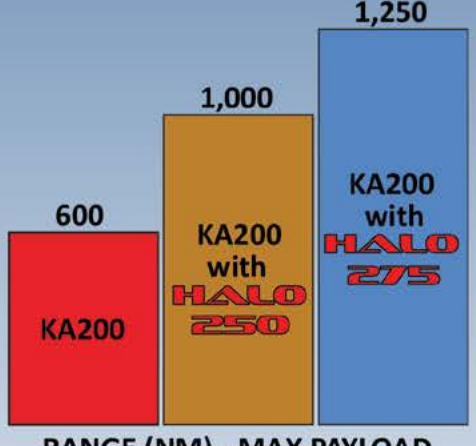

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Gathering in the Desert

Highlights from the eighth King Air Gathering

by MeLinda Schnyder

Co-sponsors King Air Nation and BLR brought together approximately 240 attendees representing pilots, owners, mechanics and 42 sponsoring companies for the 2025 King Air Gathering from March 19-21 in Phoenix, Arizona.

After a welcome reception on Wednesday evening, the next two days brought opportunities to connect, learn and celebrate at the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown and nearby Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (KPHX).

Textron Aviation started Thursday with a session that included Peter Basile providing an air safety incident review of 2024 specific to King Airs and Dan Lyon, vice president of Aftermarket Sales, sharing product and service updates and reporting that the company delivered 44 King Air 260 and 360 aircraft combined in 2024.

The agenda included a vendor marketplace, companion activities, presentations from industry experts and an inspirational keynote speech by Capt. Brian Udell, who survived an ejection at nearly 800 mph from an F-15E fighter aircraft. During FBO Day at Cutter PHX, there were on-aircraft sessions and plenty of time to explore 13 King Airs on display.

KAG wrapped up on Friday night with King Air Hall of Fame inductions, dinner and a live auction. If you didn't attend, peruse the next few pages for highlights from this year's gathering and see page 16 to read about this year's induction class.

These three aircraft were among 13 King Airs on display during the King Air Gathering's FBO Day.

BLR Aerospace, MT-Propeller and Blackhawk Aerospace teamed up at King Air Gathering to debut the 7-blade Whisper Prop system now available for King Air 300 series aircraft. Learn more about the prop on page 26.

FBO Day

Accepting King Air awards during FBO Day (left to right): Wes Norton, Paul Huet, RJ Neuberger.

FBO Day King Air Awards

For the second year, attendees voted on a series of awards presented to aircraft on display for KAG's FBO Day.

- Best Overall King Air: accepted by owner Paul Huet for Demon B200 BB-887/N87699
- Best Exterior: accepted by pilot RJ Neuberger for B350 FL-368/N984RP
- Dirty Bird Award: accepted by owner Wes Norton for C90 LJ-609/N546CN

KAG Sessions

Dean Benedict receives FAA's highest honor

The FAA presented Dean Benedict with the Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award. The award recognizes the lifetime accomplishments of senior mechanics and is named in honor of an early collaborator of the Wright Brothers who built the first aircraft engine and is recognized as the first aviation mechanic.

Dean obtained his FAA A&P certificate in 1975, making this his 50th year dedicated to King Air maintenance. He went to work in 1975 as a line mechanic for BeechWest Van Nuys, a Beechcraft dealership that provided factory training and exposure to all makes and models. Within 10 years, he rose from shop foreman to service manager and ultimately facility manager of what he helped build into one of the most successful Beechcraft service centers, and a favorite among King Air operators.

When Raytheon bought Beechcraft, Dean became director of maintenance for a corporate flight department in Las Vegas. He then founded and ran Honest Air Inc., a Beechcraft maintenance boutique with a strong following of King Airs, for 15 years. Today he and wife, Lisa, operate BeechMedic LLC, consulting with owners, pilots and mechanics on King Air maintenance issues, troubleshooting and pre-buys.

Dean was among the inaugural inductees in the King Air Hall of Fame in 2022. He is a longtime contributor to *King Air* magazine, with his Maintenance Tip article appearing six times a year.

Michael Ondik of Leading Edge Aviation helped honor his mentor Dean Benedict (right) during the FAA Master Mechanic Award ceremony.

King Air Nation Foundation announces scholarships

The King Air Nation Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, formed in 2024 with the objective of growing the King Air industry from both ends of the A&P and pilot spectrum. Through the support of the annual King Air Gathering and the event's auction, the foundation has funded efforts to increase the King Air workforce through scholarship, including two that support students in their pursuit of technical education.

The foundation announced two scholarship rollouts during KAG. These will be awarded for the 2025 fall semester to support students in mechanical or flight training at Epic Flight Academy in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, and students pursuing aircraft maintenance technician certification at Hinds Community College's campus in Raymond, Mississippi.

7-Blade Whisper Prop for King Air 300 Series Earns FAA and EASA Approval

The Federal Aviation Administration and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency have granted MT-Propeller Entwicklung GmbH supplemental type certificate approval for the 7-blade Whisper Prop system, now available for the King Air 300 series aircraft.

BLR Aerospace LLC is the worldwide distributor of MT-Propellers on the King Air and Beech 1900 platforms and said of this advanced propeller option: The new 7-blade Whisper Prop is the quietest propeller available for the King Air 300 series. Its design is built on MT's proven natural composite technology, previously used in the 5-blade propeller for the King Air platform. Each blade features a highly developed structural resin-infused wood core wrapped in carbon fiberglass composite skins, ensuring exceptional quietness, durability and efficiency.

In conjunction with the prop's certification news, Blackhawk Aerospace announced that its upgrade featuring Pratt & Whitney PT6A-67A engines is now certified with the 7-blade prop for King Air 350 series aircraft.

"At Blackhawk, we're always looking for ways to help our operators get more performance, efficiency and value out of their aircraft," said Edwin Black, president at Blackhawk. "The certification of the 7-blade Whisper Prop with our XP67A Engine+ Upgrade is a huge win. It's quieter, smoother and makes an already incredible upgrade even better. We're proud to offer this upgrade alongside MT-Propeller and BLR Aerospace to bring this innovation to the King Air community."

A King Air 350 featuring the Blackhawk XP67A Engine+ Upgrade and the MT 7-blade composite propeller was on static display during FBO Day at the King Air Gathering in March in Phoenix, Arizona. BLR's booth at the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown also featured the 7-blade prop for the duration of the King Air Gathering.

According to MT-Propeller, the 7-blade system was introduced to the general aviation market in 2020 on the Pilatus PC-12 and more than 130 PC-12 aircraft have since had the 7-blade prop installed. The company

initiated certification efforts for its MT 7-blade on the King Air 300 series in 2023.

Martin Albrecht, vice president of MT-Propeller, highlighted the following advantages for King Air 300 series operators and passengers flying with the 7-blade propeller system:

- General performance improvement (8% take-off & climb)
- No propeller speed restrictions on ground while operating in low idle
- Lower ITTs at high altitude, allowing a top speed increase up to 6 KTAS or longer engine life
- Unbeatable aesthetic ramp appeal
- Significant cabin noise and vibration reduction
- More ground clearance for less blade tip erosion and FODs due to a smaller diameter
- Nickel-cobalt leading-edge blade protection for superior resistance to erosion and damage
- No life limitation; they are repairable in case of FOD

MT-Propeller Vice President Martin Albrecht was at King Air Gathering in March with the recently certified 7-blade Whisper Prop installed on a King Air 350 also featuring Blackhawk's XP67A Engine+ Upgrade.

Tom Clements

The King Air Book Audio Version Available on Audible

Fans of Tom Clements might have wondered what could be better than reading his authoritative "The King Air Book." The answer, thanks to the King Air Academy: Listening to Tom read "The King Air Book."

KAA has published the book as an audio book, and it includes more than 17 hours narrated by Tom, a beloved and longtime columnist for King Air magazine. Find the audio version on Amazon and Audible, where it's described as, "A treasury of 37 years of flying and teaching experience in the world's most popular executive aircraft, the Beechcraft King Air. No pilot or owner of a King Air should be without this insightful, educational, illuminating and fun guide to the proper operation and care of this fine aircraft."

Tom also is the author of "The King Air Book II." He has been flying and instructing in King Airs for more than 50 years. He is a Gold Seal CFI with 23,000 total hours, including more than 15,000 in King Airs.

King Air Flap Roller Bearing Solution by Marsh Brothers Aviation Has FAA Approval

The Federal Aviation Administration has approved Marsh Brothers Aviation's self-lubricating, grease-free bearing solution to replace seizure-prone greased needle flap rollers on U.S.-registered King Air aircraft.

Approval of the King Air Flap Roller Bearing kit for commercial use by U.S.-based operators and maintenance organizations follows Transport Canada's approval in July 2024. According to Marsh Brothers, original equipment manufacturer greased needle flap rollers are prone to seizing up over time as the grease ages and stiffens. This then causes the flap rollers to slide in the track instead of rolling, which potentially can lead to abnormal track wear and damage along with unscheduled downtime and substantial repair costs.

Using MBA's elastomer science know-how and incorporating its proprietary AeroTough material, the self-lubricating bearing has greater durability than OEM flap roller bearing materials, including Teflon.

South Carolina-headquartered Stevens Aerospace worked with MBA to develop the product and is the latest service provider set to offer the new bearing solution. The MRO provider carried out ground tests on a prototype bearing onboard one of its King Air 300 aircraft, helping to optimize the dimensions of the bearings prior to market introduction.

An installed Marsh Brothers Aviation King Air flap roller.

"What operators are finding once they have retrofitted our bearing technology is that they no longer need to buy phenolic or steel thrust washers. As our rollers incorporate a polymer washer as an integral part of the roller, operational and maintenance costs are reduced even further with this simplified installation," said Juan Rivera, Marsh Brothers' business development manager. "A seized flap roller can cost more than $20,000 in parts and labor alone if it leads to damage to other components in the flap system; going with polymer bearings avoids several problems."

Companies that have installed MBA's King Air flap roller kits to date include Texas-based CSI Aviation and Alaska's Silver Sky. International customers include Rise Air, Sunwest, ASMC and Computel. Australia's CJ Aerospace and FixJet have also installed the kit.

Collins Aerospace's Venue Smart Monitor With Airshow HD Enters Market

At last month's AEA (Aircraft Electronics Association) International Convention & Trade Show, Collins Aerospace announced it is preparing the first shipments of its Airshow HD entertainment system integrated into Venue smart monitors.

The all-in-one, standalone in-flight entertainment, or IFE, solution for business aviation, including King Airs, gives operators access to Collins' Airshow HD interactive moving maps, streaming entertainment and 4K ultra high-definition resolutions in a singular hardware solution without needing to upgrade to a full Venue cabin management system.

Collins' Venue smart monitor with Airshow HD is an all-in-one, standalone IFE solution.

The system includes the Airshow HD mobile application, with all the familiar controls, iconography and functionality from cabin monitors that are accessible with the touch of a finger on a smartphone or tablet. Android and iOS app users can interact with Airshow HD from their personal device or cast content to a nearby cabin monitor.

Collins, an RTX business, said the standalone IFE system is easy to install, maintain and upgrade as new technology becomes available. It merges with aircraft connectivity systems, allowing passengers to seamlessly switch between entertainment, information and personal content for a home-like experience from the comfort of the cabin.

Available for a variety of aircraft sizes and configurations, the system contains options for touchscreen smart monitors and can integrate with third-party applications like streaming services, satellite TV or personal carry-on content.

BSEL USA's acquisition of Turbine Standard will expand its MRO operations in the U.S.

BSEL USA Acquires Turbine Standard

BSEL USA recently completed its acquisition of 80% of independent aircraft engine repair provider Turbine Standard Ltd., continuing a strategy to expand its turbine engine maintenance, repair and overhaul operations in the U.S.

A division of Bet Shemesh Engines, Ltd., BSEL USA provides comprehensive MRO services for engines including the Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A series found in the King Air. With facilities in Holland, Ohio, and Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Turbine Standard will be integrated into BSEL USA's MRO engine sector. KA

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