



SM/AG-35: Fatigue and Damage Tolerance Assessment of Hybrid Structures

Action Group Chairman: Jaap Laméris
(jaap.lameris@nlr.nl)

Background

A major challenge in the fatigue analysis and subsequent fatigue testing of hybrid structures originates from the differences in deriving fatigue spectra for metal and composites and incorporation of required environmental load factors for composites. Specifically, the following aspects can be addressed:

1. Composite structure is sensitive to environmental conditions, metal parts usually are not. If it is decided not to perform fatigue- or residual strength tests under these conditions, which aspects should be taken into account via environmental factors on the applied loads?
2. Material scatter for composites is much larger than for metals; this is usually covered by a combination of a life factor and a load enhancement factor. However, to avoid non-linear behaviour of test set-up and too high stress levels in the metal parts a maximum overall load increase should be respected.
3. In general, damage growth in composite materials is most sensitive for compression-compression cycles, where metal fatigue initiation and crack growth are more sensitive to tension-compression and tension-tension cycles. A generic process for a load spectrum reduction technique covering both aspects should be discussed.
4. Spectrum truncation levels must be different for metals and composites. Where composites experience high damage from high peak loads, metals will experience crack retardation after application of a severe load condition.

Since metals are most sensitive to fatigue damage, it is often chosen to relax one or some of the aspects from the list above for the composite fatigue justification. However, since operational strain levels in new composite designs, using improved material systems, constantly increase, the validity of this approach will be limited in the near future.

Programme/Objectives

Objectives

The main objectives are listed below:

- Validation of the basic assumptions for any applied spectrum manipulation techniques;
- Examination of the capabilities and benefits of a probabilistic approach;
- Determination of the optimum way to account for thermal loads in a non-thermo test set-up; leading to a joint 'best practice' approach for testing of hybrid airframe structural components.

Task 1 Determination of a Test Spectrum

A benchmark will be defined that will address as much aspects of fatigue and damage tolerance testing/justification as possible, for both the metal and composite structures, for both bolted and bonded joints. The benchmark spectrum will be equivalent to known definitions such as FALSTAFF (fighter wing) or TWIST (transport wing), modified for application to hybrid structure. Testing will be done on hybrid coupons and, if possible on more complex components, addressing all phases of static, fatigue and damage tolerance certification, using a number of derived spectra in order to investigate effects on fatigue and damage tolerance behaviour.

- Phase 1 Benchmark definition
- Phase 2 Spectrum development
- Phase 3 Validation of assumptions

Task 2: Probabilistic approach

Application of probabilistic analyses in combination with virtual testing techniques can be used to incorporate scatter in material properties, loading, etc. The most important scatter sources (model parameters) will first be identified by means of a probabilistic sensitivity analysis. The probabilistic methods will then be applied on a failure model to determine the scatter in derived properties, from which allowable values can be obtained. In case of sufficient correlation with experimental data, the probabilistic simulation model allows for (extensive) virtual testing, reducing the number of tests required in a fatigue material qualification program.

Task 3: Environmental influences

As one of the most important effects of the environment on a hybrid structure, thermally induced interface loads due to the differences in coefficient of elongation between metals and carbon composites come in addition to the 'mechanical' loads. In non-thermo fatigue testing, it is a challenge to apply these loads mechanically.

- Phase 1 Identification of the thermal stress condition
- Phase 2 Impact on fatigue life
- Phase 3 Testing

Results

The AG should results in establishing a joint 'best practice' approach for full scale fatigue testing of hybrid airframe structural components.

The second progress meeting was held at DLR on 19-05-2014 in Cologne and the third progress meeting was at Fokker Aerostructures at Papendrecht on 12-11-2014. SAAB hosted the fourth progress meeting on 22-09-2015 in Lynkoping.

Task 1:

A conceptual definition of a specimen geometry was proposed in order to be able to observe the behavior of the test specimen with respect to the various (conflicting) requirements associated with a hybrid (metal-CFRP) fatigue test. Further detailing of the test specimen needs to be done. A proposal for a load spectrum to which the benchmark test specimen will be subjected was made.

Task 2:

Due to the absence of DLR, the progress of DLR's work in this field of probabilistic methods could not be presented.

Task 3:

- FOI presented results of static and fatigue tests in a bi-axial test rig at elevated temperature on composite specimens.
- Saab conducted FEM studies using a new failure prediction model on the static and fatigue test specimens of the FOI tests conducted in the bi-axial test rig.
- IVW-Univ. of Kaiserslautern presented a paper on new multifunctional Hybrid Polymer composites reinforced by Carbon and Steel fibres
- FK discussed some thoughts on the determination of the test conditions since modern business jets will fly higher under colder temperature conditions.

