

RHINESTAHL AND HYDRO COMBINE TO FORM POWERHOUSE RH AERO, INTRODUCING NEW LANDING GEAR EQUIPMENT

Back in April of this year, Rhinestahl acquired HYDRO Aero. Now the two companies have merged to form RH Aero. The newly rebranded, combined company touts capability across custom-designed ground support equipment (GSE), OEM-licensed engine and airframe tooling and 26 global service centers as well as engineered solutions for OEMs, MROs and operators across the globe. The two companies say they have a globally diverse workforce of more than 850 skilled professionals and unprecedented supply capacity. Aviation Maintenance editor-in-chief, Joy Finnegan, sat down with the new president and CEO, Anthony Turner, and Dieter Moeller, chairman, to discuss how things are going with the combining of these two companies and their continued development of new and innovative solutions for their customers.

AVM: Why did these two companies decide to come together?

Anthony Turner: We set out to create a powerhouse that's going to be able to provide levels of service and support, and products that just haven't been available to our customers out there before. Through the acquisition, by combining Rhinestahl's engine OEM licenses and HYDRO's highly skilled service centers, we have become expertly positioned to support OEMs, MROs, and operators across the globe. With more than a century of experience delivering reliable full life-cycle solutions, we are setting the standard in comprehensive life-cycle solutions for aviation support equipment and services.

AVM: What's it like to acquire a company and merge two companies?

Dieter Moeller: So first I'd say it's a lot of fun, right? I mean, these things aren't always easy. I think there's great alignment from a values perspective in these two companies and these two teams.

Turner: The transaction was done because of the complementary nature and the commonality and values. Two high-quality companies that believe in their products, their brands and really believe strongly in high levels of customer support. The geographic complements, the product and service complements across each of the companies, the relative strengths and weaknesses. This goes back to the question you asked earlier, which is the service. There's great strength in the history of HYDRO, of product development and innovative solution design. And I would say Rhinestahl's historical strength technically has been about the use of the practical application products in the

field, supporting our OEMs and customers. And so, when you bring that great engineering capability together with practical applications for customers, we think that's really where the sweetness curves, right? We create something really differentiated from the market. So that's the synergy.

AVM: Talk about the current supply chain situation and how your newly combined company can help.

Moeller: With the combination of the two companies RH Aero now has, by far, the leading supply capability in the industry for the products and services that we offer our customers. We've been working really hard over the last two years because we saw the ramp coming, right? I think that's one of the things that we do really well, and I think sets us apart.

AVM: The ramp coming out of the pandemic?

Turner: Yes. We understood we had a pretty good view of what we thought was going to take place. So, we started working on capacity, capability and development early. We started that process two years ago. We were here, we were ready, and we're prepared to meet the needs of our customers. Our objective is all about reliability, making sure we're ready for our customers and they've got a reliable source for the products and service they need. Our expectation when customers are dealing with us is they're not hearing a lot about supply chain challenges, because we're taking care, we're ahead of the wave.

AVM: Talk about supporting your customers.

Moeller: The way the industry is today, everything is just in time. Schedules are hypercritical. We've really developed a reputation for when a customer calls us, they know that they can expect if this is a critical AOG-type situation, we've got somebody on the way as soon as the phone is put down. With having the in-region sites normally we'll have somebody there that afternoon to take care of them. And for customers today, that type of support is critical. We recently announced four new in-house manufacturing and service centers opening in Q4 2024 and Q1 2025: Hong Kong, Chengdu, China, Hyderabad, India, and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Standard capabilities across all locations include inspection, testing, calibration, repairs/overhaul, recertification, test of electrical equipment, modification of tools, local customer support service, pressure measurement and load testing.

Turner: Combined with GSE and airframe tooling, RH Aero offers a complete portfolio of end-to-end service and support for more



Dieter Moeller, Chairman



Anthony Turner,
New President and CEO

than 100,000 tools in our installed base. This service is provided by technicians located in 26 service centers in 10 countries. Our strategy is to have qualified technicians located in-region for our customers to drive market leading turn-times and customer service. Using our Readiness Hub tooling inventory system and our Managed Services program, our Readiness Managers provide an unprecedented level of collaboration and service through our on-site, in-your-shop approach to conducting tooling management and partnering with OEMs and MROs.

AVM: Why had these things not been available before?

Turner: It was a matter of capability and the size. It's a critical mass issue with customers today asking for much more in-region support. With our level of support, which has always been at a very high level, being able to do that at customers' facilities just requires an awful lot of resources. And with this combination, we do have the resources to be able to go and supply that footprint around the world.

AVM: You mentioned high levels of support in-region. Talk about what that means to this company.

Turner: It means being able to basically be the experts in aviation support equipment and services for our customers and handle that for them. They don't have to worry about that anymore. We're taking care of it for them. We're able to reach out to customers around the world and take care of customers at 26 major service centers. Then we've got a hub and spoke network where we've got a lot more reach even than in those 26 centers.

AVM: RH Aero has just unveiled new landing gear equipment, the MLGTMULTI-2. This is a solution specifically designed to enhance the removal and installation of main landing gears on common widebody aircraft. It is designed for the Airbus and Boeing wide body passenger and freighter fleets. You say this landing gear change equipment is designed for a safer, faster and more cost-effective operation. Tell us about the advanced features of it that are designed for safety and efficiency.

Turner: It enables quick and secure trunnion disconnection thanks to its maneuverability and flexible design. The ergonomic handheld control panel makes for user-friendly operation. The MLGTMULTI-2 electrically controlled, high-precision movement provides significant advantages and ease of use compared to the traditional processes. Ground-based operation eliminates the need for cranes or on-wing work, significantly increasing safety during the process. Additionally, the system is optimized for easy

transport, enabling transport on standard pallets, without the need for special handling or exceptional transport measures.

AVM: Tell us more about your COBRA system and how it helps engine changes go quickly.

Moeller: It allows us to change engines out within hours, which is something that used to take days.

Turner: The COBRA system basically is a purpose-built cradle electronic system that is able to take the engine off at the angle it needs to be taken off and to be replaced. And it's able to do this in a way that is secure and safe with much less time than the old way of doing this.

Moeller: It can be up to about an 80% reduction in time. This kind of plays into the scarcity of qualified labor, right? The lack of technicians in the market, which is not going away. It's going to get worse. All of these things that used to take multiple people, these products reduce the skilled manpower to do these types of procedures. And given the lack of people in this field that's going to be crucial for customers.

AVM: How do you encourage innovation?

Turner: It's about being with your customers, because the best product and service ideas come from the needs of the customers. And you can't really learn about these problems unless you're spending time with customers. Voice to customer is critical. It's key. We're very much a customer-first organization, and we really, really put an emphasis on our team being with our customers, understanding their environment, the challenges they face. That's where the best ideas come from.

AVM: What can customers expect from this new powerhouse in the future?

Moeller: We are well on our way through the integration process and bringing the synergies of both companies to the combined organization. We've done that symbolically through our rebranding effort of RH Aero being consolidation of the two, Rhinestahl and HYDRO, groups, and within our leadership structure and the organization. I've moved my position from being president and CEO of the organization to being CEO and chairman. We put Anthony in and just recently announced that he is the new president of RH Aero which sets us up for the next generation. Another step toward supporting our customers worldwide. We are really excited about that.

Turner: From the company itself, customers are going to see the broadest capability in support equipment-related services in the market. They're going to see the highest level capacity and they're going to see the most innovative solutions coming from our company. We're pretty far out ahead of this race. Our plan is to create more distance from our competitors.

Moeller: Take a look at our history. I've been with the company now 34 years, and throughout those 34 years, the times when the organization, and our ability to serve customers, has been at its highest, were those times that we were experiencing the strongest growth. Those things go hand-in-hand because our people are really excited about being in a strong growth environment. I think there's so much more opportunity to take care of customers than what has been done in the past. And I think with where the industry is going, that's going to be more and more important. **AM**