

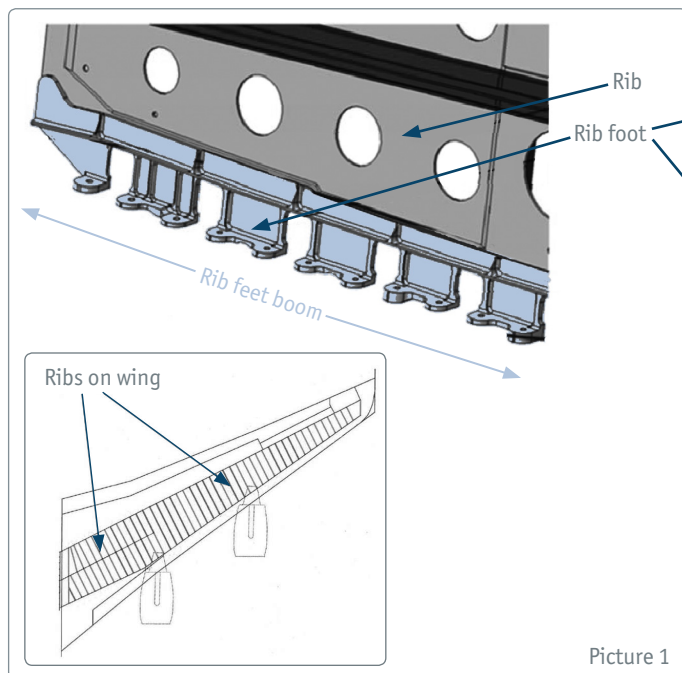


## Airbus A380 News – Update

### A380 Wing Rib Feet Cracks — Recent Developments

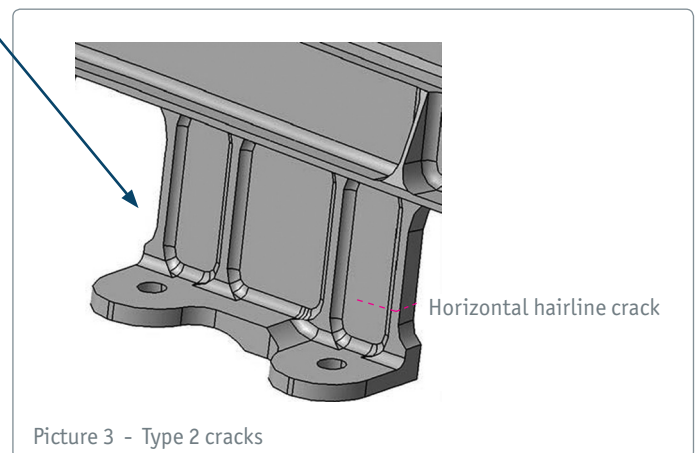
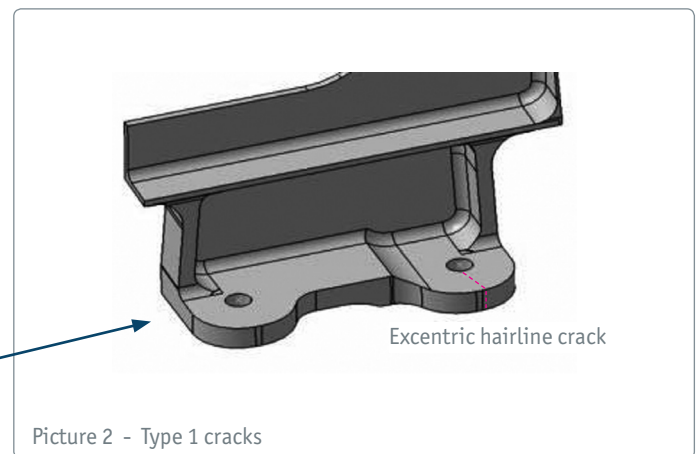
Doric’s Asset Management team have continued to monitor very closely the situation regarding hairline cracks that have been found on certain wing rib-skin attachments on a number of A380 aircraft, as originally reported on 10th January 2012.

On January 20th, 2012 the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) issued an Airworthiness Directive (AD), which requires the operators of 20 Airbus A380s presently in service to conduct a detailed visual inspection of certain wing rib feet and report the inspection results to Airbus. This is a precautionary measure and this practice is one of the reasons for the outstanding safety record of the commercial aviation industry.



The AD identifies two different types of cracks on the rib feet (see picture 1), defined by Airbus as Type 1 cracks (connecting the rib feet holes) and Type 2 cracks in the vertical rib feet flange (horizontally). The rib feet connect the ribs to the inside skin of the wing. The wing ribs run perpendicular to the wing and provide for the stabilisation of the wing shape. Type 1 are cracks on the rib feet originating from the rib to skin panel attachment holes (see picture 2). Type 2 cracks are cracks in the vertical flange of the rib feet (see picture 3).

Type 1 cracks have been reported following visual inspections on, to Doric’s knowledge as of today, at least seven A380s and Type 2 cracks have, as of today, been identified on two A380s. However, given the only recent discovery of this issue, more analysis will be required and this may result in further action being necessary. It is in this context that the AD was issued on January 20th, 2012.



Airbus has identified that the Type 1 cracks were caused by a combination of high pre-stress, build stress and the particular aluminium alloy used to make some of the brackets (or wing rib feet) applicable to the production of the wings until recently.

The actual root cause for Type 2 cracks is being investigated and Doric expects further results in the near future, taking into account the findings of the inspections ordered by the AD. Doric expects further ADs to be issued on this subject soon, setting out required inspection, repair and replacement procedures.



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Neither types of cracks threaten the structural integrity of the aircraft in the short- and medium-term, but will have to be addressed in order to avoid any potential long-term issues.

For in-service aircraft, a program is already being worked out by Airbus that includes a permanent repair and long-term resolution of the issue with the Type 1 cracks. Replacement kits will be supplied and delivered by Airbus in accordance with the existing aircraft warranties.

We expect Airbus to provide a similar solution in respect of Type 2 cracks, where required, once the AD inspection results have been analysed.

The financing parties of Doric-managed aircraft, i.e. lessors, investors and financiers are not affected, but are covered by the triple net lease arrangements. Even a theoretical permanent grounding of the aircraft type would result in a termination payment from the lessee, keeping lessors, investors and financiers whole.

The Doric Asset Management Team will review the findings of the inspections arising from the AD and will monitor any related repair activities for all A380s under management. Any significant developments will be reported as they arise.

The AD issued by EASA can be downloaded under:  
<http://ad.easa.europa.eu/sort-2D>.



Picture 4 - Packaged rib feet booms on-site, for onward installation



Picture 5 - A380 wing undergoing inspection