

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

The maintenance technician shortfall might be an issue keeping many MROs up at night, but **Armel Jezequel**, deputy general manager of Vallair Industry, is celebrating a major new investment in training in Europe



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Armel Jezequel is the deputy general manager of Vallair Industry

The demand for skilled aeronautical technicians is at an all-time high as MROs are simultaneously facing augmented or deferred maintenance requirements combined with the natural retirement of their experienced workforce.

France-based Vallair, which has facilities close to Paris, in Châteauroux, as well as in Montpellier in the south of the country, has taken a definitive and proactive approach to resolving this shortfall and providing qualified aircraft technicians for the aviation industry as a whole, by investing in Aircraft Academy, an EASA Part-147 approved organisation providing online and classroom-based aviation training for Airbus and Boeing aircraft engineers and mechanics.

Consulting firm Oliver Wyman predicts that over the next ten years 58 per cent of the global airline fleet will comprise fuel-efficient planes designed and built after 2000. The resulting necessity will be for mechanics to have the flexibility in their skill sets to seamlessly transition from maintenance workscopes on classic aircraft variants, as well as

accommodating the requirements of new generation aircraft.

As an active participant within the aviation industry in France, Vallair belongs to two significant clusters: Aerospace Valley and Aérocentre. Occitanie-based Aerospace Valley has over 500 affiliated companies and is responsible for some 120,000 jobs in the aviation and space flight industries. Aérocentre, the regional centre of excellence in Centre-Val de Loire, works to develop and sustain the aeronautical sector across the area

with over 120 member organisations. Vallair stands as one of their key players over the last fifteen years.

For the time being, the training courses offered by Aircraft Academy are intended for those aeronautical maintenance technicians who hold an EASA Part-66 B1 or B2 or B1/B2 license, currently working in an EASA Part-145 approved maintenance centre, airline and aeronautical equipment manufacturing facility. The courses cover Airbus and Boeing type rating training, as well as parts theory and practice T1 & T2.

I am based in Châteauroux, and am closely involved with both aviation clusters, so I can see the advantages for potential candidates first hand.

58%

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This is a fantastic opportunity for current aeronautical engineers looking to expand their skill sets as well as those considering future careers in aviation. The training will benefit both Vallair employees as well as third parties looking to augment their skill sets and will focus on Airbus A320 / A330 family and Boeing 737 family aircraft.

Trainees will also benefit from training across multiple engine platforms such as CFM, CF6, PW400, V2500 as well as the newer LEAP-1B.

Prior to this investment, Vallair has partnered with other training establishments and has encouraged apprentices into its Montpellier and Châteauroux facilities.

We are now accelerating skills resource for the future that will not only feed our own workforce and support the company's growth ambitions in narrowbody and widebody MRO, but also to support and develop our multi-platform cargo conversion capabilities coming online in the near future.

We are looking to build a passion for aviation, and hope that this training programme, and the opportunities and rewards that it can afford, will encourage people to choose a more vocational path for their children. We want parents and students to choose aviation safe in the knowledge of the life-long specialist careers which lie ahead.

Within Europe, a career as a mechanic is not often perceived as one to aspire to. Schools, colleges and career advisers need to concentrate on the opportunity. This is undoubtedly the key to re-educating people's mindsets towards these technical, skilled, hands-on roles. As an aircraft mechanic, many doors are opened for you, including the possibility

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of experiencing different countries and cultures. This is an international profession with a global demand that is only set to increase over the coming years. This is the time to seriously consider a career in aviation!

Vallair has invested significantly in the Centre Val de Loire Region and has partnered with Aircraft Academy as well as other educational establishments in the Châteauroux locality. Its ambitious plans will see the company train 300 aeronautical technicians within the next five years. 📍



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