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Subject: CEN24LA282 - Flap System Examination

The airplane was strapped to a trailer and the wings were positioned back in place to facilitate the examination. Substantial damage was observed on the right side of the fuselage structure forward of the main landing gear. (Figure 1)



Figure 1. Substantial damage on right side of fuselage

The flap handle was positioned between the right and left seat. (Figure 2) There were 3 positions of flaps with full flaps at 40°. A clear detent existed in each position with a cupped notch for each of the 3 flap positions. (Figure 3) The button at the top of the flap handle depressed about 1/4 inch to release the interlock and extend or retract the flaps.



Figure 2. Flap handle on the floor between the right and left seat.



Figure 3. Flap detent.

The flaps were manipulated in and out of the fully extended flap position using the flap actuator handle. The flap controls were continuous and extended and retracted the flaps as designed. The flap actuator handle remained secure in the detent. Investigators were unable to duplicate the uncommanded retraction of the flaps from 40° to 0°.

Flight control continuity was confirmed from the two flight control sticks in the cockpit to the respective aileron and elevator control surfaces. Continuity was confirmed from the rudder pedals aft to the rudder control surface.