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Subject: N711FA Landing Gear Inspection

To better understand the nature of the failure, the NTSB hired Corporate Air Management, an aircraft maintenance outfit at Dothan Airport, to raise the airplane on jack stands, inspect the landing gear and operate the landing gear system. This inspection was witnessed by the FAA who documented findings in a report with photographs. An excerpt from the inspection, as well as annotated photos, is provided below. The FAA was not able to verify the rigging of the landing gear due to its damaged condition.

"With the aircraft fully jacked, the landing gear system was carefully examined. NTSB contracted maintenance personnel removed interior components, exposing the landing gear motor, gearbox, emergency extension mechanism, and all associated mechanical linkages. The left main landing gear extension rod exhibited extreme deformation near the gearbox and appeared to have come into contact several relays during the malfunction. This was exhibited by scrape marks across the top of the relays. The left uplock rod was snapped from the threaded attach point on the gear. The right-side landing gear linkages and rods appeared to be unaffected as well as the nose landing gear. Unable to safely move the left main landing gear, it was isolated from the rest of the aircraft gear system by maintenance technicians. Manual retraction and extension were successfully accomplished using the manual gearbox which is also normally operated by electrical motor. Nose landing gear and right main landing gear were able to be completely retracted and extended. Once complete, the landing gear operation was attempted electrically. The landing gear motor circuit breaker immediately opened, indicating the motor was damaged. Presumably from the incident and during the in-flight troubleshooting attempts that were detailed in the PIC statement. Based on statements, the landing gear motor did operate in flight after allowing the motor to cool and retract the gear one final time before landing.

Closer inspection of the left main landing gear revealed the extension rod slip joint retention hardware had been sheared at some point. Closer examination of the main landing gear door hinge points detailed a "clean" break of the aft, inboard gear door hinge. No twisting or other deformation was indicated on the hinge assembly. Distinct discoloring was noticed within the aluminum alloy hinge material. Near the forward hinge point, the gear door exhibited slight curling at the edge, bare metal, and scratches within the metal that were perpendicular to the direction of normal aircraft movement. This appeared to be fresh damage."



Figure 1: Left Inboard Main Gear Door



Figure 2: Underside of Inboard Left Main Gear Door



Figure 3: Abrasion Damage on Underside of Inboard Left Main Gear Door

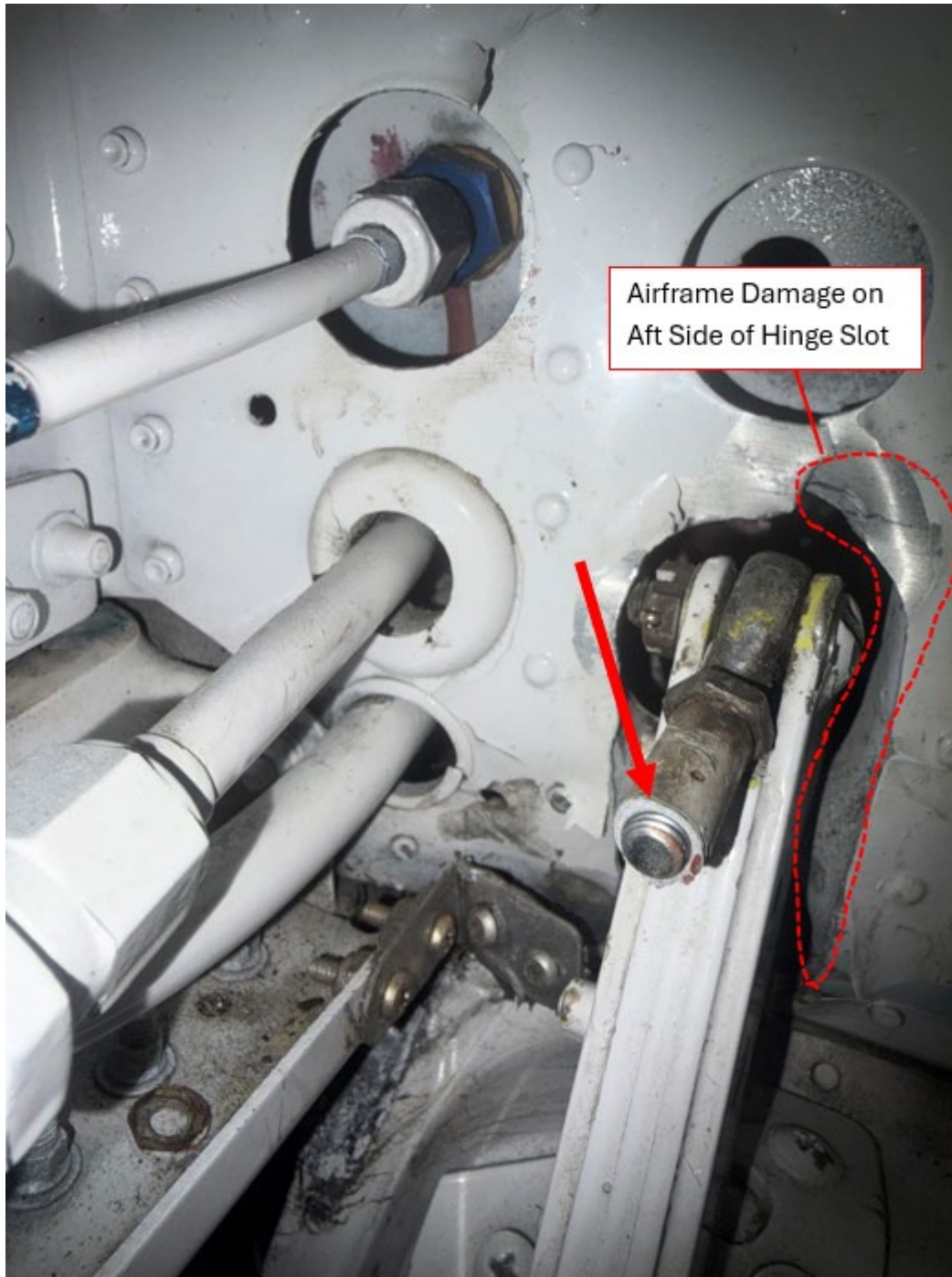


Figure 4: Failed Left Main Gear Door Link Assembly, Attached to Forward Inboard Hinge



Figure 5: Rod Portion of Failed Left Main Gear Door Link Assembly



Figure 6: Failed Left Main Landing Gear Door Aft Inboard Hinge



Figure 7: Bent Left Main Gear Retraction Rod Assembly



Figure 8: Buckled Main Gear Retraction Rod Assembly After Removal



Figure 9: Bent Left Main Landing Gear Door Actuator Rod Assembly



Figure 11: Left Main Gear Well, After Removal of Main Retraction Rod and Detachment of Downlock Cable