

History of BBA Aviation

BBA Aviation can trace its origins back to a small industrial belting works founded in Scotland in 1879.

Over time, what was known as BBA Group, grew its operations to include a wide range of specialist industrial and automotive products before becoming involved in aviation. In 2006, with the demerger of its materials technology division, Fiberweb, BBA became a focused aviation support and aftermarket services business and was renamed BBA Aviation.

Following the acquisition of Landmark Aviation in 2016 and sale of ASIG in 2017, the company is now primarily focused on supporting the global Business and General Aviation (B&GA) market and has three key businesses: Signature Flight Support; ERO (Engine Repair and Overhaul); and Ontic.



Industrial and automotive products

For its first thirty years' the company's main product was solid woven belting used for power transmission and mechanical conveying in industries such as mining. The company's manufacturing interests then grew to include a wide range of industrial and automotive products, sold around the world. These included the transmission linings used on the Model T Ford motor car; materials for Spitfire, Hurricane and Typhoon aircraft; and, later, the first brake pads fitted to Jaguar production cars.

By the early 1980s the BBA Group, the holding company created in 1967 and now mostly focused on automotive and friction materials, was the world's largest supplier of original equipment brake pads to the automotive industry.

Aviation & nonwovens

In 1986, BBA Group made its first major move into aviation by acquiring the UK based landing gear and hydraulics business APPH and a similar business in the US. It also acquired its first nonwoven fabrics business by buying a part share in US-based Reemay. Throughout the 1990s BBA Group continued to grow its aviation and nonwovens portfolio.

In 1992 Signature Flight Support was formed through the merger of Page Avjet, an executive aircraft interiors business, and Butler fixed base operations. BBA Group took full ownership of Signature in 1996. Concurrently BBA acquired more nonwoven manufacturers including Fiberweb Group in the USA and Europe.

By 1997 BBA was focused on two major divisions: Aviation and Materials Technology (nonwoven fabrics and friction materials).

BBA continued to acquire fixed base operations (FBOs) to add to the Signature network and moved into jet engine repair and overhaul through the acquisition of H+S Aviation in the UK and UNC Airwork in the US in 1998. In 2000, the automotive friction materials division was sold and BBA moved from the Engineering to the Transport sector on the London Stock Exchange. ASIG, a business supplying flight support services to the commercial aviation market was acquired in July 2001.

BBA Aviation

In November 2005, BBA Group announced that it intended to separate its two businesses by the sale of its Materials Technology division. The demerger was completed in November 2006 and the remaining aviation-focused business was renamed BBA Aviation. The company also acquired Ontic during the year.

In 2007, Simon Pryce joined BBA Aviation as its new Group Chief Executive.

From 2007 BBA Aviation continued to grow the Signature network via acquisition and through the Signature Select™ licensing model which was launched in 2012. ASIG also continued to grow through acquisition and contract wins. Ontic acquired GE Aviation Systems' fuel measurement business in 2011, strengthening its position in the UK with a new facility at Cheltenham. APPH was sold to Héroux-Devtek Inc in 2014.

In 2016, BBA Aviation announced the successful completion of the acquisition of Landmark Aviation, a leading provider of specialist B&GA support services, adding 62 locations to the Signature network. Landmark Aviation was acquired from The Carlyle Group, in a deal worth over \$2 billion, marking a transformational moment for BBA Aviation, Signature Flight Support and the general aviation industry. In the summer of 2016, Signature reached 200 locations, covering key B&GA destinations in North America, Europe, South America, Africa and Asia. In the same year, Ontic continued the expansion of its product offering through the acquisition of a portfolio of legacy avionics parts from GE Aviation.

In January 2017 BBA Aviation completed the sale of ASIG and announced the creation of Gama Aviation Signature Aircraft Management, a partnership between Gama Aviation and Signature, and one of the largest aircraft management and charter businesses in the world.