



Masco's leadership group (from left): Coby Sisco, director of business development; Kevin Fraley, director of sales; Clay Massey, vice president; Jeff Massey, president.



The company employs about 65 people across its two facilities in Grapevine, Texas, and Lafayette, Louisiana.



THE DETAIL SPECIALISTS

Having spent half a century honing its craft, Masco has built an enviable reputation for the quality of its work. *Vertical* visited the company's headquarters in Grapevine, Texas, to find out what sets it apart.

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Sometimes, the details are everything. Like drilling six feet through the foundation of your shop floor to anchor a testing device to its own foundation, separated from the surrounding building by an expansion gap, to ensure that the device will never move a millimeter. Now *that's* calibration.

Or, dissatisfied with the general state of shipping containers for a product, engineering a solution to better protect the cargo while keeping weight and shipping costs minimal.

For over 50 years, Masco, a maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) provider that specializes in instruments, avionics and accessories, has made such details its business, resulting in an enviable reputation for the quality of its work. Simply put, its customers have come to expect that when Masco services a part, that part will return with improved reliability and will be less likely to require an unscheduled removal.

An indication of how Masco's customers feel can perhaps be seen in the longevity of their relationships with the company — with many stretching back several decades. Today, Masco counts many of the industry's largest operators among its clients, including PHI, Air Methods, and Era.

Masco has also become a trusted partner (a phrase repeated often by company's leadership) of OEMs. It is an authorized service center/dealer for Safran, Northrop Grumman, Thales, Honeywell, Sikorsky, Bendix/King, Astronautics, and Mid-Continent Instruments and Avionics, among others; as well as





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Masco's Honeywell Sky Connect engineer works on the tracking system. Masco is a Honeywell factory-authorized repair center and dealer.



A technician repairs a Honeywell Primus Weather Radar antenna.

an approved vendor for Leonardo, Bell, Airbus Helicopters, and Sikorsky.

Its breadth of expertise spans electronic flight instrument system (EFIS) displays, satellite tracking and communications systems, VHF and navigation/communication systems, radar altimeters, weather radar systems, AHRS displays, gyros, flight directors, primary flight indicators, and engine monitoring gauges. In terms of accessories, it services starter generators, generator control units, linear actuators, searchlights, static inverters, and power supply units, to name just a few.

But despite all this, Masco's workscope continues to evolve, with new projects and services on the horizon. *Vertical* visited the company in January 2019 to take a look back at Masco's half century in the helicopter industry — and find out what its future holds.

Headquartered in a 20,000-square-foot facility in Grapevine, Texas (near to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport), Masco is led by Jeff and Clay Massey (the company's president and vice president, respectively), sons of the company's founder, Bill Massey. Bill himself was a second generation aircraft instrument specialist, and decided to apply his talent to his own company with the founding of Masco in 1968.

Established as a small instrument repair station in Love Field, on the outskirts of Dallas, Masco originally focused on buying, selling, and refurbishing aviation instruments, mainly for fixed-wing general aviation customers.

As the company grew, Masco switched its focus to helicopters — in particular, those operating in the then-flourishing offshore oil-and-gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico. To better service his company's growing number of customers in Louisiana, Bill Massey opened a small office in Lafayette in 1979. The company proved such a good resource for offshore operators in the Gulf of Mexico that, at one point, that market represented about 75 percent of Masco's business.

But as fortunes fluctuated in the offshore sector over the following years, Masco made astute business decisions to endure the industry's leaner times. During the oil-and-gas slump of the



A technician at work on one of Masco's starter generator test stands.



Masco is able to work on over 7,500 parts and components, spanning helicopter types produced by five different airframe OEMs.



The company's origin was in aviation instruments, with Masco founder Bill Massey establishing it as a small instrument repair station in Love Field, on the outskirts of Dallas.

mid-80s, its acquired inventory through trade-outs with operators that gave it greater flexibility to help reduce or eliminate aircraft-on-ground situations; while Masco's later diversification away from its focus on that region and market meant the recent oil-and-gas downturn hasn't had a decisive impact on its business. In fact, year over year, Masco continues to grow.

"We're worldwide now, and involved in the corporate fixed-wing market, military market, commercial market, and then all the different market segments within the helicopter industry," Clay Massey, who joined the company in the late 1980s, told *Vertical*.

AN EVOLVING BUSINESS

Today, Masco employs about 65 people across its two Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) -approved repair stations in Grapevine and Lafayette.

Kevin Fraley, director of outside sales, joined the company seven years ago, but has known Masco since he began working in the MRO sector in 1988.

"Masco is one of those companies that you always trusted," he said. "You knew that their handshake, and when they said that they were going to do something for you, they were going to keep their end of the bargain. That kind of simple approach to business, set up by Jeff and Clay's dad, has been the foundation to the company's success."

Over the years, Masco's business has grown into new areas, largely led by customer requirements.

"Our customers took us down the road to whatever problem they needed to have solved," said Fraley. "So, we've kind of evolved into repairs, overhaul, manufacturing, logistic support — you name it.

"We're not a vendor in this business, we're not the supplier, Masco is a trusted partner to the OEMs and operators alike. The business has grown out of the need for the aviation community to have trusted partners."

This diversification has led to it performing work for operators in a variety of market segments — including search-and-rescue, emergency medical services, law enforcement, firefighting, military, training, and corporate. Masco also counts the manufacturers themselves as customers.

"We [provide] build-to-print manufacturing [for the OEMs], and we repair [and] maintain a lot of their legacy product lines," said Fraley. "We provide OEM-level support on many of their products."

Masco's partnership with Honeywell, in which it provides service support for Honeywell's Sky Connect tracking system, is a key example of this. Sky Connect is a complete tracking system that helps operators actively manage their fleet, and as a Honeywell factory-authorized repair center and dealer, Masco provides new systems, sells, and installs Sky Connect, and provides exchanges, repairs, and recertifications. It also manufactures the latest Sky Connect Tracker 3A with push-to-talk and tracking capabilities, along with flight data monitoring.

"As the technology grows we've expanded our capabilities to match that, because that's what our customers are demanding," said Fraley. "And with Sky Connect, we're now part of the connected aircraft — we're part of the future."

Masco also has a longstanding partnership with Northrop Grumman LITEF to serve as the manufacturer's North American service center and aircraft-on-ground exchange center for its



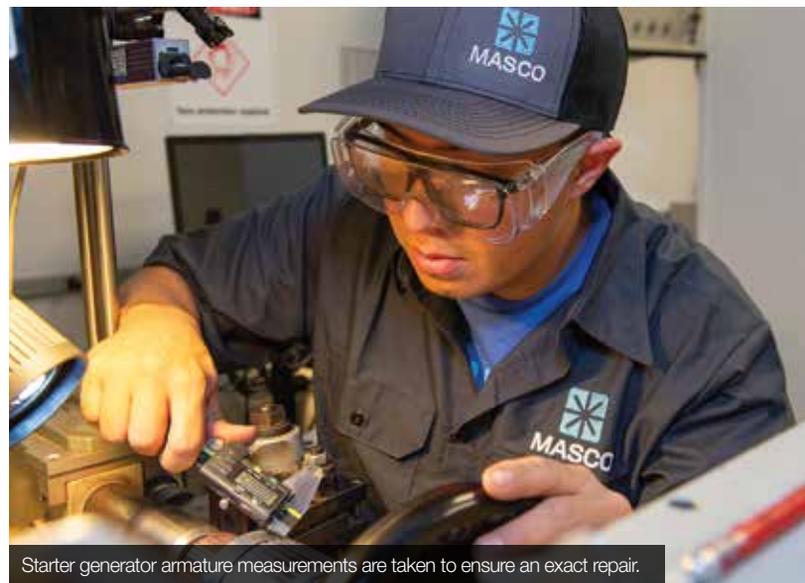
Masco has a longstanding relationship with Northrop Grumman LITEF. Here, a technician tests a LITEF attitude and heading reference system.



A technician focuses on the repair of a standby attitude gyro.



A technician with 35 years of experience balances an electromechanical gyro rotor assembly.



Starter generator armature measurements are taken to ensure an exact repair.

attitude and heading reference system (AHRS) units (these can be found on aircraft including the Sikorsky S-92 and S-76, Leonardo AW139, Bell 412, Airbus H160, and many fixed-wing aircraft).

A more recent development for Masco was its move into the starter generator repair and overhaul business about seven years ago.

“We saw that the starter generator was always considered an inherently unreliable, problematic type of device, and we thought, ‘Why is that?’ ” said Clay Massey. “We looked at it, decided it was just because they weren’t being done right, and saw an opportunity — ‘If we get in there and do things right, we’re not going to be the cheapest in town, but we’re going to give you the best product.’ ”

The decision required heavy investment in the company — something the Masseys are happy to do to help build the foundation for the company’s future.

Working closely with the engineers at starter generator OEMs, Masco built its aftermarket solution in-house from the ground up.

“The attention to detail developed through working on the instruments and the avionics translated very well to the precision and attention that was required in the starter world,” said Fraley.

Today, Masco offers enhanced support for the starter generators it services, with trend monitoring and reliability reporting on a regular basis. And it counts some of the largest fleet operators in the world among its customers.

“Starter generator MRO is a super competitive market, and in our opinion, we’re the leader in that field now,” said Massey. “Our starters make their time, and everybody out there knows it.”

A BROAD PORTFOLIO

The starter generators are among over 7,500 parts and components Masco works on, spanning helicopter types from five manufacturers. The company puts a lot of work into product development so that its offering continues to evolve with the requirements of its customers.

“Whenever we take on a new program, it goes through checks and balances to make sure that we can support it with personnel, inventory, equipment, capacity — everything down to our box suppliers,” said Fraley. “It’s not done on the fly — it’s a concerted effort to make sure we can do it right the first time, and make it a repeatable process.”

Masco places high priority on technical training and quality



The avionics and instrument shop at Masco. All told, the company's Grapevine facility spans 20,000 square feet.



Putting the finishing touches on a starter generator repair, as a technician applies a coat of paint.



A repaired starter generator is placed into the customized packaging Masco created to better protect the product during shipping.

control, with the company's AS9100D and ISO9001 quality management certificates, along with "5 S" practices, demonstrating the staff's "significant collective aptitude," said Massey.

Many of those working at Masco have been there for decades, with an extremely small staff turnover allowing for continuity of expertise in the services the company provides. Fraley said the company is also fortunate to be located near to several high-quality electronics schools that help provide a highly-skilled, educated workforce.

"They're very skilled technicians," said Fraley of Masco's workforce. "We send our people to the factory to be trained for best practices . . . so the OEMs are in here all the time. Most of the OEMs we work with, they view us as an extension of themselves, just as the customers view us as an extension of their maintenance and reliability department."

Fraley said the longevity of service among the staff at the company was the result of Masco's approach to management.

"The way Masco treats their customers and their OEM partners is the same way they treat their employees," said Fraley. "Over time, that commitment of — 'Hey, we care about you' — that matters. And that's what happens in this company."

Massey said that visitors to the company's facilities often leave with the same impression.

"They always walk out of the shop, and they say two things, and it makes our hearts warm," he said. "First, they say: 'Wow, this place is really clean, organized and efficient — it's amazing, a great shop.' The second thing is always, 'Wow, your employees really seem happy and dedicated.' It's a body of work. It's not one

particular thing we do, it's a relationship with our staff that develops over time. Our team has a first class facility, the proper tools and training, and a focus on quality."

Jeff and Clay represent the second generation of Massey at the company, with the third generation joining them over the years in the form of Jeff's son and daughter (Cole and Kristen), and Clay's son (Joe), who work in various departments within the company.

"We're proud of the fact that we're still a family-owned and -operated business," said Massey. "There's been a lot of family-owned and -operated businesses in this industry that have been bought, and the family's long gone — and we're one of the few that remain."

Looking to the future, Massey said Masco will continue to evolve in line with its customers' requirements — likely involving increased work related to the "connected aircraft" through enhanced satellite communications, as well as preventative maintenance through health and usage monitoring systems.

While it has an enviably diverse MRO offering and a similarly broad customer base, Masco believes the secret to its success will always remain the reputation for quality and reliability it has worked so hard to build and maintain for the last 50 years.

"If anybody in the helicopter industry thinks they're simply providing a product to their customers, they're misguided," said Fraley. "You're providing reliability, safety, care, guidance and a commitment to doing the right thing. That's what everybody wants — and our customers know that they're not going to have to worry about anything they receive from Masco." 