



KEEPING THE *Convairs* FLYING

IFL GROUP'S IMMACULATE FLEET OF CONVAIRS KEEP ON FLYING AND EARNING THE COMPANY MONEY, BUT THE END FOR THIS AMERICAN CLASSIC MAY NOT BE FAR OFF

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Based in Pontiac, Michigan, the IFL Group operates the world's largest fleet of Convair twins — consisting of seven CV580 and four CV5800 freighters. Headquartered at Oakland County International Airport, the company operates *ad hoc* and contract charters for a wide variety of customers and is managed by founder Alan Ross and partner Michael Church.

IFL Group began operations as Air Contract Cargo in 1983 and later changed its name to Contract Air Cargo. In the early days it flew on-demand charters with Cessna 310 and Piper Navajos out of Pontiac. Douglas DC-3s were added to the fleet in 1984 and, at one time, the company was the largest modern DC-3 operator in the world. The first Convair CV340 was added in 1993, with turbine-powered CV580s following in

1996. By 2000, the company was operating a fleet of CV340, CV580, and CV5800 freighters.

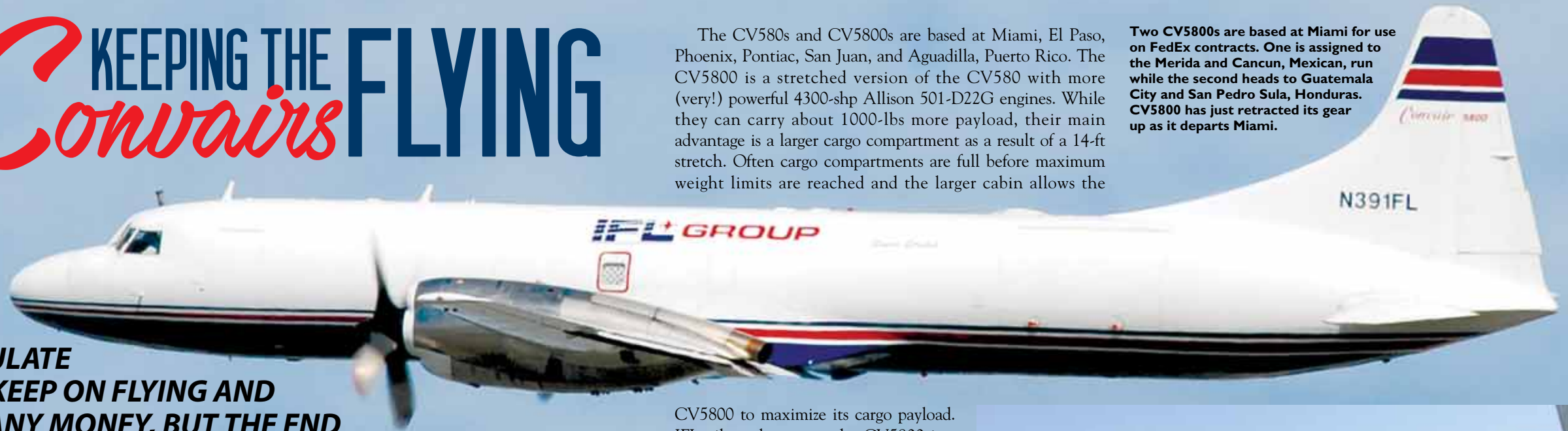
Today Contract Air Cargo is wholly owned by the IFL Group and operates Falcon 20 aircraft on Part 135 freight and passenger *ad-hoc* charters. The seven CV580s, four CV5800s, and two B727s are operated by Gulf and Caribbean Cargo (doing business as IFL Group), which is a Part 121 certificated air carrier. The Convairs are typically operated under contract and based at multiple locations while the B727s are based in Pontiac and used for *ad-hoc* charter work. The company employees about a hundred pilots who fly automotive, military, medical, and general cargo (including hazardous material) throughout the United States, Canada, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.



IFL Group's busiest Convair base is Miami International where two CV580s and two CV5800s operate. CV580 N141FL basks in the Florida sun as it awaits its next flight.

The CV580s and CV5800s are based at Miami, El Paso, Phoenix, Pontiac, San Juan, and Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The CV5800 is a stretched version of the CV580 with more (very!) powerful 4300-shp Allison 501-D22G engines. While they can carry about 1000-lbs more payload, their main advantage is a larger cargo compartment as a result of a 14-ft stretch. Often cargo compartments are full before maximum weight limits are reached and the larger cabin allows the

Two CV5800s are based at Miami for use on FedEx contracts. One is assigned to the Merida and Cancun, Mexican, run while the second heads to Guatemala City and San Pedro Sula, Honduras. CV5800 has just retracted its gear up as it departs Miami.



CV5800 to maximize its cargo payload. IFL pilots also report the CV5800 is a better performer than the CV580.

In addition to these active Convairs, there are two C-131/CV340 piston engine and two CV580 aircraft stored at the company's home base at Oakland County International Airport. C-131B N7813B was operated by IFL with Contract Air Cargo titles for about a decade from the mid-1990s until being retired and stored at Pontiac. C-131F N8149P is a former Beaufort County Mosquito Control bug sprayer that was acquired in June 2011. Both were considered for turbine conversion at one time but are now for sale. CV580s N51211 and N51255 were acquired from General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems in October 2011. Since neither has a cargo door, they were probably acquired for spare parts or, less likely, CV5800 conversion.

IFL Group's busiest Convair base is Miami International Airport, where two CV580s and two CV5800s are normally assigned. The CV5800s are used on FedEx contracts with one making daily trips to Merida and Cancun, Mexico, and the second going to Guatemala City and San Pedro Sula, Honduras. The FedEx contract is very important to IFL and one of the Miami-based CV580s is kept on backup in case a CV5800 goes unserviceable. The second CV580 is on contract to Cayman Airways for daily trips to the Cayman Islands. Fish, food, and clothing are normally carried on the outbound flights with return flights returning lightly loaded or empty. Almost all of the Miami based flights are out and back in the same day with no overnight stops.

Two CV580s are typically assigned to Rafael Hernández Airport in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The Convairs support daily FedEx and other contract flights to Los Americas



Allison 501-022G turbines of 4300-hp each power the CV5800 — almost double the power of the R-2800 piston engines installed in the original CV240/340/440 series. The stretched fuselage of the CV5800 gives the design a more elegant appearance. Note the ex-Linea Aerea Mexicana de Cargo CV440 XA-TDL parked in the background. (Paul Snyder)

Airport in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Another CV580 is based at Luis Munoz Marin International Airport in San Juan. This aircraft supports a DHL contract and makes a daily roundtrip flight to St. Johns, Antigua.

The two remaining CV5800s are based in the western United States, with one in El Paso and the other in Phoenix. The El Paso aircraft supports a United Parcel Service contract and makes a roundtrip to Chihuahua Monday through Friday. Block time is 0.9-hrs with the flight normally taking 45-min. With a cargo capacity of about 17,000-lbs, the flight normally goes to Mexico lightly loaded and returns to El Paso fully loaded with UPS packages, auto parts, and batteries. The second CV5800 is based at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and is assigned to a DHL contract. It