



The largest Learjet 35 fleet – for target simulation.

## Me & My Aircraft: 'Straightforward' veteran pulls its weight

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The Learjet 35 is ageing but FAI says it still manages to get 1,800 flying hours a year out of each of its three aircraft. Volker Lemke, director of sales and marketing, says: "While its days are slowly being counted down, the Learjet 35 remains the aircraft charter industry's workhorse in many areas, especially that of worldwide air ambulance flights. Given its so far unparalleled cost-benefit ratio and its well-known appropriate flight range, the Learjet 35 has proven itself in the last few years as one of the cornerstones of FAI's achievement of worldwide service delivery."

Lemke says that, during 2008 alone, the Learjet 35s flew air ambulance missions to over 100 countries all over the world and logged over two million nautical miles. "Even though these aircraft are nowadays proving to be maintenance intensive because of their age and their high degree of use, FAI still manages to get about 1,800 flying hours a year out of each one of them," Lemke adds. "One of the reasons for this is that, since it was one of the most extensively produced and most widely distributed worldwide aircraft of its class, there remains a good supply of spare parts."

FAI has established its own maintenance facility which can carry out a variety of technical support operations up to and including the 12,000 hours mark. Lemke says: "Round-the-clock coverage by our own technical department also allows us to take care of unplanned maintenance issues with a short time frame such as unexpected technical problems."

FAI has an extensive network of providers and well thought out logistics as far as spare parts are concerned. "This," Lemke says, "allows us to obtain the on-time delivery of essential spare parts. We fundamentally do not see the need for any further significant efforts on the manufacturers' side, as the most interesting improvements on the Learjets in recent years have been developed by other companies such as Raisbeck or AVCON." FAI's Learjets have meanwhile been completely modified and now have an improved performance regarding range, aircraft stability, and fuel consumptions thanks to wing modifications, tip tank extensions, delta fins and lockers.

The limited space in the cockpit, some antiquated instruments and a high frequency of small technical problems and so forth, all do not make the Learjet 35 the aircraft of choice for a worldwide operation where many pilots are concerned. "They want to familiarise themselves with a modern state-of-the-art aircraft," Lemke points out. "There are, however, also some fascinating aviation aspects: lots of power, high speed, great manoeuvrability that make the aircraft behave a bit like a sports aircraft and still make this workhorse attractive for pilots."

He adds: "In addition our pilots get to know a lot of places around the world that would not be accessible with other aircraft of the same category such as, for example, the Citation II. The Learjet 35 has a special advantage over such aircraft. From the technical standpoint our technicians get pleasure from working on a good and straightforward model, whereas more modern aircraft generally bring with them much higher technical complexity."

Bruno Sorensen of North Flying A/S and Andreas Rhein of Senator Aviation Charter both say they are very satisfied with the maintenance support, dispatch reliability, operating capability and value of the 35A.

### Useful contact details from the Handbook of Business Aviation in Europe

<a href="#">FAI rent-a-jet</a>	Charter
<a href="#">Bombardier Aerospace</a>	Aircraft
<a href="#">North Flying</a>	Charter
<a href="#">Senator Aviation Charter</a>	Charter