Transall back in business
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NNOVATION is not always neces-
sary. If transport-aircraft tech-
nology seems untouched by progress,
it is because established, turboprop-
powered designs offer value for money which would be impossible to match in an all-new aircraft burdened with today's development costs. Why re-design the wheel, making it more complex and expensive, just to go a little further, a little faster? Lock-heed's Hercules remains in production after 25 years and now Europe's Tran-sall is back in business.

The French Air Force has about 75 piston-powered Noratlas transports, replacement of which was under study in the mid-1970s. Production of the Service's other transport, the Franco-German Transall C.160, had ended in 1972 after a respectable run of 179 aircraft for Germany (90), France (60), Turkey (20) and South

Africa (9). Members of the Trans-porter Allianz consortium, Aero-spatiale, MBB and VFW, retained some of the jigs; others were broken up.
A further Transall order offered commonality with existing Air Force transports and was politically desir-able, as the aircraft was 50 per cent French. In October 1976 the consor-tium reformed and a year later Tran-sall production was relaunched with a l'Armee de l'Air order for 25 air-craft, to be assembled by Aerospatiale. Indonesia has since ordered three C.160s for transmigration duties and has been allocated delivery positions from the French batch. The first two
Transalls will fly in September and
December next year and will be used
for flight trials. From January 1982
the production rate will be one a
month.

Heading The squat, purposeful lines of the Franco-German Transall C.I60 typify today's "irre-placeable" turboprop-powered tactical transports. Below The Messier main undercarriage can be semi-retracted to "kneel" the aircraft for ease of loading

''Second-generation" Transalls are not identical to their predecessors. Ex-perience with first-generation aircraft,, has led to the deletion of the port loading door, as this is seldom used. Addition of a 9,0001it (2,000gal) wing centre-section fuel tank extends range and an Aerospatiale in-flight refuelling probe is added above the flight deck. Some of the latest Transalls will be able to give, as well as receive, fuel using an Intertechnique hose-and-drogue system. The autopilot and navigation systems have been updated but their function remains unchanged, as the customer has requested that both generations be flown by the
same crews.

Excluding the ramp area, the cargo hold offers 115m3

(4,060ft3

) of use-
able space with a floor area of 42-6m2 (460ft-). The hold is 13 -5m long, 3-15m wide and 3m high (44-3ftX 10-3ftX9-8ft). The cargo door is in two sections; the aft part lifts up into the aircraft while the lower ramp has two positions—level with the hold floor for loading from trucks or air dropping and fully lowered for load-ing of vehicles. The eight-wheel Mes-sier main undercarriage can be par-tially retracted to "kneel" the aircraft ' and reduce ramp slope.

Maximum payload is 16,000kg (35,3001b). The hold is large enough to accommodate 12 LD3 containers— the type used for underfloor cargo-carriage in widebody airliners—or up to eight pallets depending on their size. Various vehicles. including one 14.000kg (31,0001b) AMX10P armoured personnel carrier, can be transported without requiring special equipment. Conversion to a troop transport is claimed to take less than l

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2hr. Optional extras to ease cargo handling include a roller-conveyor loading system which can be combined