WORLD NEWS

FedEx

orders

Caravan
TENNESSEE

After protracted negotiations
and repeated suggestions of
an imminent announcement,
Federal Express has ordered
30 Cessna Caravan I utility
aircraft, as forecast in Flight
(July 30). The Memphis-
based small-package carrier
has taken options on a further
70, Each will be "cargo-
configured" and able to carry
a specially developed 307ft1
underbelly pod.

Federal Express will take
its first Caravan I in late
November/early December
1984, and will be among the
first to receive the type, which
is scheduled for certification
in October. The carrier will
have another aircraft almost
immediately. These will be
followed by two a month
during the first six months of
1985, and three a month
subsequently. The options
cover 35 delivery positions in
both 1986 and 1987.

Aircraft acquisition-and-
sales manager David Sutton
tells Flight that FedEx looked
at six types before selecting
Caravan: all the others were
twins. Caravan's lower initial
purchase price and estimated
cost of single-crew operations
were two deciding factors.
Caravan I will be used on
FedEx's proposed system of
"mini-hubs" being formed to
expand its network of eight
major cities, feeding overnight
packages across the country
through the Memphis central
clearing house (Flight, Nov-
ember 5). The operator's
12-month evaluation pro-
gramme with four leased
Cessna 402 freighters began
three weeks ago and FedEx is
"very happy" so far. Services
are operating between San
Angelo and San Antonio in
Texas, and Duluth and
Minneapolis. Further services
will be added.

Federal Express is inter-
ested in a stretched Caravan I;
the current model "cubes out
before it weighs out".
Negotiations have gone on
for almost two years, and no
doubt both sides feel that they
have an acceptable agree-
ment. The more FedEx exam-

ined its mini-hub concept, the
more it felt that two types
were needed. Several tvpes
with a 6,500/7,5001b payload
are likely to be proposed to
complement FedEx Caravans.
FedEx will continue to
operate ten Dassault Falcons
for at least another year. It
has disposed of four to Ever-
green International and two
have gone to Itek. The origi-
nal FedEx Falcon has been
refurbished and placed in the
Smithsonian Institution's
National Air and Space
Museum. One aircraft is
leased to Flight Systems at
Mojave. California, and ten
are stored at Miramar,
Arizona. Eight of FedEx's
727-200s have been delivered.

US Navy
hits Syrian
Sam sites
BEIRUT

United States Navy aircraft
hit Syrian surface-to-air
missile sites in the Bekaa
Valley region of Lebanon on
December 4.

The 28-aircraft reprisal raid
was launched early in the
morning, after Syrian posi-
tions fired on US Navy photo-
reconnaissance aircraft the
previous day. During the raid

one A-6 Intruder and an A-7
Corsair were shot down. The
A-7 pilot, Cdr Ed Andrews,
ejected safely and was
recovered from the sea near
Jounieh by a Lebanon Navy
patrol boat. The A-6 pilot was
killed and his injured bomb-
adier was captured. Syria
claims that three US aircraft
were shot down.

Flight understands that the
strike was launched by
Carrier Air Wing 3 from the
USS Dwight D. Eisenhower.
The usual composition of a
mixed force or "Alpha" strike
is E-2C Hawkeyes providing
stand-off deep search, EA-6B
Prowlers for stand-off
jamming, and F-14 Tomcats
for target combat air patrol.
Defence suppression would be
handled by A-7 Corsairs
which specialise in "Iron
Hand" anti-Sam/AAA radar
strikes, while the A-6
Intruders are used to take out
the missile launchers.

Shortly after the strike,
Syrian-backed Druze rebels
bombarded US Marine Corps
positions on Beirut Airport;
eight Marines were killed. US
Navy ships returned fire.
HMS Fearless has joined
the naval forces off Lebanon.
Flight understands that its
Wessex and Commando heli-
copters will replace Royal Air
Force Chinooks in Cyprus as
backup for the British Army
peacekeeping force in Beirut.

As Columbia carries Spacelab 1 around the Earth, Nasa's third flightworthy Orbiter is being prepared for its space debut. Called Discov-ery, the new Orbiter is the first to make extensive use of insulation blankets instead of white silica-foam tiles

Piper loss
continues

LOCK HAVEN

After a year in which it
announced six new models.
Piper has filed an operating
loss of $38-5 million on
aircraft sales worth some
$140-1 million. This includes
the supply of about 30 kits for
T-35 Pillan aircraft (valued at
about $4-5 million) to be
assembled in Chile.

A year ago, Piper incurred a
$22-4 million loss on sales
valued at $205 million. The
previous 12-month period to
September 30, 1981, saw the
delivery of aircraft worth $382
million.

Bangor Punta, which has
owned Piper since 1977, has
written off $54 • 7 million
against "goodwill relating to
Piper Aircraft" in its own
accounts, which consequently
show a loss of $64-6 million.
The parent company made
a $3 • 1 million profit a year
ago.
The decision to write off
this sum is seen by Bangor
chairman David Wallace as
"prudent". Piper's loss
"reflects the depressed state
of the general-aviation
industry". Last year's loss
has combined with "an
unexpectedly large loss this
year, and our expectation (is)
that Piper will report a loss in
1984, though not of this
magnitude". The $54 million
"non-cash charge to income
is in keeping with our
conservative accounting
philosophy", Wallace says.

Piper reports considerable
interest in its Malibu six-seat
pressurised single, of which
three examples had been
delivered by the end of Nov-
ember. It has sold almost all
the units scheduled to be built
in the current year. Develop-
ment of the Aerostar 700P
and Cheyenne IV is
continuing, with the first
Cheyenne IVs set for delivery
to customers in Mav or June
1984.

Other Piper models in
production for 1984 include
Warrior, Archer, Dakota,
Turbo Arrow IV, Seneca III,
Saratoga turbocharged and
SP variants, Chevenne IA.
IIIA and IIXL, Navajo Chief-
tain, Mojave, T.1029 and
T.1040.

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