

MRO

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HEAVY CHECKS

Strategy to
manage cost

A321 Freighter

Vallair partners
with CHAMP

Supply Chains

AJW bags
easyJet



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Candidate for Conversion

A321 cargo conversion in process.
Photo: Vallair

The A321 freighter conversion programme continues to gain traction. **Keith Mwanalushi** checks in on the latest developments.

Vallair, the multi-faceted aviation business is the launch customer for the A321 cargo conversion. In July, the company announced signing an MoU with CHAMP Cargosystems to develop the first cargo management system and e-freight integrated solution for the Airbus A321 freighter.

The partnership between Vallair and CHAMP will be a collaboration and pooling of resources to provide CHAMP's weight and balance system for the new Airbus A321Fs and to establish a reliable e-freight system which can be utilised in conjunction with all of Vallair's future A321F conversions. Being able to offer CHAMP data and information on both the A321P2F and the A321PCF freighters will allow Vallair to contribute to a comprehensive cargo management system which is bespoke to these freighter variants. Vallair says this package will then be offered as a cost effective, load efficient solution

to their customers in conjunction with digitalised tracking of all cargo.

Alistair Dibisceglia, Chief Leasing and Trading Officer at Vallair explains to *AviTrader MRO* that Vallair's partnership with CHAMP will create all the required software to ensure that all weights and balances are correct increasing load efficiency, as well as offering digitalised tracking which will benefit the growing demands of e-commerce. "CHAMP is a long-established provider of IT solutions for the air cargo industry and by providing them with data from our P2F and PCF conversions, we are pioneering programmes for the A321Fs of the future." Dibisceglia

adds that considering the A321F is a new product, there are currently no aircraft in service which would require the retrofitting of this cargo management system.



Dibisceglia says the A321P2F is one of the most efficient freighters currently available.
Photo: Vallair

"CHAMP is delighted to enter into this new partnership with Vallair and we are proud to be supporting not only a market leader but also another Luxembourg based company," says Arnaud Lambert, CEO of CHAMP Cargosystems. "Digitalisation has been the focus of the air cargo industry for the last five years and our customers are really seeing the benefits of our cargo management digital solutions as they come into fruition. Weight

“We are currently evaluating more than a dozen [A321] with more expected imminently.”

*Alistair Dibisceglia,
Chief Leasing &
Trading Officer*



A321Fs are coming on to the market.
Photo: Qantas

and Balance is a proven powerful, yet intuitive-to-use digital solution for advanced load planning and is designed to optimise aircraft loading while ensuring regulatory compliance, minimise turnaround, make maximum use of available space, and reduce fuel burn. Currently there is no software for the A321F as it is a brand-new conversion, and we are excited to partner with Vallair and be the first to offer this solution to the market.”

Vallair saw huge potential in the A321 P2F a while ago not only as a replacement for the Boeing 757F, but as a key tool for the cargo industry to achieve the projected growth rate of the air freight market in

general – in particular driven by express services and e-commerce. Vallair is the launch customer for the A321 P2F signing agreements with two conversion specialists Precision Aircraft Solutions and EFW.

The A321 is the first derivative of the base-line A320, it has a stretched fuselage and entered service in 1994 with Lufthansa, around six years after the original A320. Since then, the A321 has grown in popularity on the passenger market and with the new more advanced fuel-efficient variants like the Neo coming along, these aircraft are opening new opportunities for airlines, chiefly on long haul thin routes.

In terms of the A321 feedstock situation,

Dibisceglia reports that Vallair is seeing a steady influx of A321s on to the market which has affected the stability of pricing. He says typically, they would expect a 20% - 25% decrease in price post COVID – “we are currently evaluating more than a dozen, with more expected imminently.

“As the A321Fs are coming on to the market, asset owners are looking to Vallair as we have demonstrated a proven exit strategy which maximises the life of their assets with all the associated industry benefits.”

The A321P2F will be the first aircraft to introduce a containerised lower deck to the market segment of narrowbody freighters; a significant game-changer as Vallair has continuously suggested. Dibisceglia explains the significance. “The ability to hold ten cargo containers will certainly be a game changer for any hub as it speeds up the loading process therefore reducing turnaround times. In addition, when it comes to the main deck, the A321P2F can offer a further fourteen cargo positions. From an operator’s perspective, the A321P2F is one of the most efficient freighters currently available delivering on range, payload and fuel consumption, and we certainly see it taking a place and the forefront of the freighter market.”



Vallair sees huge potential in the A321 P2F.
Photo: Keith Mwanalushi