

# VAYU

*Aerospace & Defence Review*

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**Vayu Shakti 2019**

**The 'Real Thing'**  
**Spice of the Matter**

**Aero India 2019**

**'114' on their minds !**  
**Regional Air Connectivity**

## RAF to re-train with Hawk T1



The RAF is to resume fast jet aircrew training on the early variant Hawk T1 operated by No. 100 Squadron at RAF Leeming North in Yorkshire, later in 2019. The measure has been taken to cope with a shortage of capacity in the service's current fast jet training provision, handled by Nos. IV and 25 (Fighter) Squadrons flying the Hawk T2 at RAF Valley, Wales. Meanwhile, the latest RAF Hawk T2 of No.25 (Fighter) Squadron was delivered to Valley, Wales on 9 January, providing advanced fast jet training (AFJT) for RAF and Royal Navy pilots alongside No. IV (Army Co-operation) Squadron at the same base. The latter has split into two, with the re-formed No.25(F) Squadron taking on responsibility for the first phase of AFJT. The move was prompted by increased demand for fast jet pilots on the front line to fly the Typhoon and Lightning. The Hawk T1 last served in an advanced fast jet pilot training role with No.206 (Reserve) Squadron which was disbanded at Valley in June 2016. The RAF expects to retire its last 80 Hawk T1s by 2030.

## Irkut Yak-130s proliferate in South East Asia



*Yak-130 combat trainer of the Laotian Air Force*

Yak-130 combat training aircraft produced by Irkut Corporation of Russia, are being ordered in large numbers by operators in South East Asia, the latest deliveries being made in January 2019 to the Laotian Air Force. The Yak-130s will substantially add to the strength of this air arm, and prepare pilots to fly further advanced aircraft in the future, the Yak-130s themselves able to perform a wide range of combat missions.

Laos has become the third country in Southeast Asia to procure Yak-130s, following the Air Forces of Bangladesh and Myanmar. It is understood that Myanmar has in 2016 received another batch of six Yak-130 aircraft from Russia, taking their number to 12 units.

## Dassault Aviation's first Rafale delivery to Qatar



On 6 February 2019, a ceremony hosted by Eric Trappier, Dassault's Chairman was held at Merignac for delivery of the first Rafale to the Qatari Emiri Air Force, under the patronage of Dr Khalid bin Mohamed Al Attiyah, Qatari Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs, and Geneviève Darrieussecq, French State Secretary to the Minister of Armed Forces, and in the presence of Qatar Emiri Air Force.

This first Rafale delivery, on schedule, comes after the signature in May 2015 of the contract for the acquisition by the State of Qatar of 24 Rafales to equip its Air Force, plus an additional 12, in December 2017, for a total of 36 aircraft. In the frame of this contract, Qatari pilots as well as technicians are being trained in France both by the French Air Force and the French Industry.

## Dutch F-16s return from Jordan

On 2 January 2019, six Lockheed Martin F-16s of the Royal Dutch Air Force (*Koninklijke Luchtmacht, Klu*) returned to the Netherlands from Jordan.



Between October 2014 and December 2018 (with a gap between mid 2016 and the beginning of 2018), more than 3000 missions were flown. On 31 December 2018, the last operational mission was flown against targets of IS/ISIS/DASH in the Syria/Iraq region. On the 1 January 2019 the departure was organised and the next morning, the six F-16s went back home to the Netherlands.

*From: Joris van Boven and Alex van Noye.  
Photo: Joris van Boven*

## Last flight of Belgian Hercules



On 21 December 2018, the last Belgian Lockheed C-130H Hercules made its very final flight. In a couple of years, all Belgian C-130s will be replaced by the Airbus A400M aircraft. Operationally, the Belgian Air Force will remain at strength with the remaining aircraft and with the sharing capacity of the European Air Transport Command (where 7 European Air Forces share their transport assets); no problems are expected to fulfill the transportation tasks. Seven Airbus A400Ms have been ordered by the Belgian Air Force and together with the single A400M ordered by Luxemburg, all eight aircraft will be based at Melsbroek AB where they will take over the ramps and hangers of the C-130s.

*From: Joris van Boven. Photo: ADJ Kris Moens, PRO 15 Wing at Melsbroek AB.*

## Thales TALIOS qualified by French DGA

Combining reconnaissance and targeting capability with visibility of the entire critical decision chain, from gathering intelligence to neutralising threats, is a key requirement for modern armed forces. Building on 40 years of experience in reconnaissance and identification systems, Thales has developed the TALIOS optronic pod to meet this challenge. The Initial Operational Capability (IOC) version of the new pod has now successfully completed qualification testing by the French defence procurement agency (DGA).

TALIOS combines the latest generation of high-resolution electro-optical and infrared sensors with line-of-sight stabilisation and outstanding image processing capabilities. In addition to its



"unprecedented target identification performance," the new pod provides long-range threat engagement capability to counter fixed and moving targets.

## 19 more Boeing P-8A Poseidon ordered

The US Navy has awarded Boeing a \$2.4 billion production contract for the next 19 P-8A Poseidon aircraft. The contract includes 10 aircraft to add to the current inventory of P-8As in the US Navy fleet, all five currently under contract for Norway and four aircraft remaining for the existing United Kingdom contract, bringing the total United Kingdom acquisition to nine aircraft.

The United Kingdom and Norway are acquiring the Boeing aircraft through the Foreign Military Sales process and will receive a variant designed and produced for the US Navy as the P-8A Poseidon. The United Kingdom will receive their first aircraft in 2019 and Norway will begin receiving aircraft in 2021.

