



ALENIA AERMACCHI UNVEILS FIRST POLISH M-346S

News / Manufacturer



Final assembly work has begun on the first two Alenia Aermacchi M-346 advanced jet trainers destined for the Polish air force.

Revealed during a 24 February ceremony at the manufacturer's factory in Venegono Superiore, Italy first flight of the initial Honeywell F124-engined jet is due in May.

Warsaw has ordered eight aircraft under a €280 million (\$308 million) deal. They have been equipped with modifications for the country, including a P5 datalink and drag chute.

Alenia anticipates achieving Italian military certification for the variant in October, ahead of an end-November delivery of the first two examples to the Polish air force academy in D?blin. Subsequently, the manufacturer intends to hand over a pair of aircraft in February, May and October 2017.

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Bartosz Glowacki

Poland's contract covers the training of 16 instructors by November 2017. An initial cadre of six pilots began receiving training on the type in November. The 12-month process was initially conducted by Alenia, using ground-based training devices, before the students transfer in March to work alongside the Italian air force's 61 Sqn, operating from Lecce air base.

The next batch of four Polish pilots will be inducted in July, with a third tranche of six beginning in

January 2017.

Nearly 140 Polish air force maintenance technicians will be trained ahead of service entry.

The Venegono event was attended by Lt Gen Miroslaw Rozanski, commander general of the Polish armed forces, Brig Gen Tomasz Drewniak, deputy commander of the Polish air force inspectorate, and Col Pawel Smereka, commander of the service's 41st Training Airbase.

The M-346s will replace the Polish air force's fleet of 38 aged PZL Mielec-produced TS-11 Iskras.

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