RUAG INTERNATIONAL TO MODERNIZE OF THE ROYAL THAI NAVY DORNIER 228

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RUAG MRO International is comprehensively modernizing Dornier 228 aircraft for the Royal Thai Navy. The upgrade includes the installation of glass cockpits and new mission equipment as well as the modernization of avionics systems. The Thai Navy uses its Dornier 228 to monitor the exclusive economic zone called the “200-mile zone”. The aircraft and their crews conduct ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) missions in the territorial waters of the Gulf of Thailand for the purpose of border surveillance to combat illegal trade and fishing.

Initially, RUAG will now be modernizing two of the seven aircraft in the Royal Thai Navy Dornier 228 fleet. This also includes transporting the aircraft to and from Thailand and providing training in the use of the new equipment. For the upgrade, the aircraft were disassembled on site in Thailand. Subsequently, an Antonov AN-124 transport aircraft flew the Dornier 228 to Oberpfaffenhofen, where the experts from RUAG MRO International carry out a comprehensive inspection. In the process, they remove the paint completely and eliminate any corrosion damage to the aircraft structure, which is now 25 years old.

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The aircraft will be equipped with glass cockpits and modern avionics systems (COM, NAV). The interior, cockpit and aircraft cabin will also be revamped. It will receive modern mission equipment that will enable tasks to be performed more effectively and efficiently. These include a 360° search radar, infrared cameras as well as a mission management and data link for data transmission to ground stations and/or ships.

Due to the aircraft modernization, pilots, crew members and technicians will need to be trained in the use of the new equipment. RUAG MRO International will therefore also organize training for crew members and technicians, partly in Germany and partly on site in Thailand. In addition, RUAG's factory pilot team will be responsible for ferrying the modernized aircraft to Thailand.

The Royal Thai Navy is dependent on the greatest possible availability of its aircraft to be able to continuously perform its sovereign tasks. "We are therefore doing everything we can to keep aircraft downtime as short as possible. Especially under the current conditions brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, this is a challenge," explains Thomas Imke, Sales Manager. Even sending a five-man team to Thailand for dismantling the aircraft involved considerable effort, given reduced flight connections and quarantine regulations. "These are challenges that we are happy to take on because the satisfaction of our customers is our top priority," concludes Thomas Imke.

07 FEBRUARY 2021

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https://50skyshades.com/news/maintenance-trainings/ruag-international-to-modernize-of-the-royal-thai-navy-dornier-228

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