RAAF'S FIRST PC-21 PILOTS BEGIN CONVERSION TRAINING

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The first Australian pilots to undertake conversion training on the Pilatus PC-21 pilot training aircraft recently arrived in Switzerland, the RAAF has announced.

These pilots will form the transition team responsible for the development of the new training curriculum and simulators that are being acquired under the AIR 5428 Pilot Training System project, the contract for which has been awarded to the Lockheed Martin-led Team 21.

The PC-21 is set to replace the PC-9/A and CT-4B, and primarily will be based at RAAF Base East Sale and RAAF Base Pearce.

"The capabilities of the PC-21 make it ideally suited to a very wide training envelope," the RAAF stated on January 18. "It can be used from day one in the training system, eliminating the need for an elementary flying training fleet, but also bridges the performance gap between traditional turboprop trainers and lead-in fighters."

Air Force stated that of the 49 PC-21s Australia is acquiring, 42 are destined for the Pilot Training System along with seven flight training devices, with three to be allocated to the Aircraft Research and Development Unit (ARDU), and a further four for Forward Air Control with 4 Squadron.

The first AIR 5428 aircraft and simulators are expected to be delivered in mid-2017, with the first

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pilot training course to begin in 2019.

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