QINETIQ SIGNS FOR FOUR H125 FOR EMPIRE TEST PILOTS' SCHOOL

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QinetiQ has signed a deal for four Airbus H125 helicopters as part of its modernisation of the Empire Test Pilots' School (ETPS), which it manages alongside the UK's Ministry of Defence (MOD).

Worth approximately £15 million, the deal will see Airbus Helicopters' UK design team upgrade the Garmin G500-equipped aircraft with, among other capabilities, a 3-axis autopilot, dedicated communications equipment and Traffic Awareness Systems. This is in addition to a Flight Test Instrumentation suite, which is used to test and evaluate aircraft design and performance – a critical part of a test pilot or flight test engineer's training.

The contract includes aircraft modification and 10 years' full HCare support package – industry's most comprehensive service coverage – helping to deliver full availability.

The aircraft are expected to enter service in early 2019.

John Anderson, Managing Director Air & Space, QinetiQ said: "We and the MOD are investing

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£85m in ETPS under our strategy to modernise the UK's Test Aircrew Training capability. Assembling a fleet that provides the very best value and performance is vital to this strategy and the H125 will play a leading role. It's an exciting time at ETPS, not just for us, but for our customers, who can look forward to improved programmes, delivered in more flexible way, using cutting edge aircraft."

Colin James, UK Managing Director, Airbus Helicopters said: "As one of the world's 'Big Four' test pilot schools, it is hugely encouraging to think that for many years to come, all ETPS helicopter test pilots and flight test engineers will train on Airbus aircraft. With this deal Airbus Helicopters is committed to providing long-term support to help make future ETPS helicopter training a success."

The acquisition of the H125s is part of QinetiQ's £1 billion deal with the MOD, signed in December 2016, to modernise the UK's test aircrew training and air range capabilities. As part of the agreement, QinetiQ is investing £85m in ETPS to reduce operating costs, enhance capabilities and drive future growth. This includes the purchase of eight new aircraft to comprehensively update and future-proof the fleet that delivers training.

01 MARCH 2017

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https://ut.50skyshades.com/news/maintenance-trainings/qinetiq-signs-for-four-h125-for-empire-test-pilots-school

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