

## Five Afghan PC-12s for SIGINT Conversion

AN AIRBORNE signals intelligence (SIGINT) capability is to be incorporated into five of 18 Afghan National Army Special Operations Forces Pilatus PC-12/47Es. A \$9.354 million Foreign Military Sales (FMS) contract for the modification was awarded on March 18 by the USAF's 645 Aeronautical Systems Group (ASG) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, to Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC).

Work in SNC's facility at Centennial Airport, Denver, Colorado, is expected to be complete by December 31. ■

## Afghan Special Mission PC-12/47Es

Serial No.	Con No.	Notes
FAA reg'n		
YA-137807	1378	delivered Nov '13
YA-138252	1382	delivered Nov '13
YA-138707	1387	delivered Nov '13
YA-139299	1390	delivered Dec '13
YA-1407	1407	delivered Jan '14
YA-1419	1419	delivered Apr '14
YA-1427	1427	delivered Sep '14
YA-1437	1437	delivered Sep '14
YA-1441	1441	delivered Sep '14
YA-1442	1442	delivered Nov '14
YA-1443	1443	delivered Nov '14
YA-1444	1444	delivered Nov '14
YA-1445	1445	delivered Dec '14
YA-1446	1446	not yet delivered
YA-1447	1447	not yet delivered
YA-1448	1448	not yet delivered
YA-1449	1449	not yet delivered
YA-1450	1450	not yet delivered

**Note:** The two-letter suffixes for most of the above serials are as yet unknown, as they are still operating in US civilian markings.

## First Two Malaysian Army S-61A Nuri



**Above:** One of the first two Royal Malaysian Air Force S-61A-4 Nuri helicopters being transferred to the Malaysian Army M23-01, about to land at RMAF Butterworth on March 17 en route to LIMA 2015, where it was formally handed over days later. Arnold Lee/Fox

AN INITIAL two Sikorsky S-61A-4 Nuri helicopters, M23-00 and M23-01, have been transferred from the Tentara Udara Diraja Malaysia (TUDM – Royal Malaysian Air Force) to the Pasukan Udara Tentara Darat (PUTD – Royal Malaysian Army Aviation). The handover ceremony took place on March 20 at the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA) exhibition at Langkawi, Malaysia. Both have been repainted in a new digital camouflage.

A further two will be transferred to the army shortly, with all four being used for pilot conversion training at first. Twelve will eventually join the Army, having been replaced in TUDM service by 12 EC725 Cougars.

All of the army's Nuri are being upgraded before delivery to resolve obsolescence issues, including replacement of old analogue instruments with a new glass cockpit. Although in TUDM service since 1967, these elderly helicopters have accumulated

an average of just 14,000 flight hours each and the army says that they will be good for another 15 years of service. The TUDM planned to retire all of its Nuri fleet, but found funding for just dozen EC725s. Fifteen retain Nuri will go through a similar upgrade to those of the Army. Both the Army and Air Force will be fitted with door-mount 12.7mm guns to provide support for ground troops, three of the TUDM helicopters having already received this modification. ■

## Armed Afghan MD530Fs Delivered

SIX ARMED MD530F (MD369F) Coyote Warriors have been delivered to the Afghan Air Force (AAF) for close air attack operations. All six arrived on March 17 at Kabul on board Atlas Air Boeing 747-400F freighter N477MC.

Four have been identified as 216 (c/n 0218FF, ex N6030N), 218 (c/n 0218FF, ex N6090X), 219 (c/n 0219FF, ex N6090Y) and 220 (c/n 0220F, ex N6061Z). They are the first armed variants to be delivered to the AAF, which had previously taken delivery of six for training. One of the six was lost on September 7, 2013 when it landed on and exploded an IED, seriously injuring both crew. The surviving five continue to be operated by the Rotary Wing Training Squadron at Shindand Air Base.

A Foreign Military Sales contract for 12 additional MD530Fs was awarded to MD Helicopters on September 26 of last year (see *Aviation* AF October 2014 p30). The order exercised 12 of the 48 options in the original contract



**Above:** Newly arrived Afghan Air Force MD530F Coyote Warrior 218 (c/n 0218FF, N6090X) is moved into a hangar at Kabul, Afghanistan, on March 17, 2015. Fox/Arnold Lee/Fox

to buy the initial six MD530Fs. The new delivery comprised the first six while the remaining half dozen are due by September.

A further contract awarded to MD Helicopters on October 1, last year covered weaponising the 12 new MD530Fs and the five remaining unarmed examples already in service. This will give them a dual role in training while being available for close air support missions. Their Mission Equipment Package includes the FN Herstal M3P G30 calibre machine gun installed in the company's Heavy Machine Gun

Pod with an FN HMR400 Laser and Case Collector, carried on a Mace Aviation Extended Range Weapons Wing.

The machine gun pod is an 'all-in-one' weapon system, with the 1,100 revolutions per minute M3P gun, a 400-hour ammunition box, firing solenoid and a re-cocking actuator. This is all mounted in an aluminium and composite frame assembly and the pod is connected to the helicopter through 14in (355mm) NATO suspension lugs, enable the helicopter to be mission-ready in less than 30 seconds.