

Leonardo-Finmeccanica: Brig. Gen. Shmuel Tzuker of the Israeli Ministry of Defence visits Venegono for the delivery of the last of 30 Israeli M-346 aircraft

- Moretti: Brig. Gen. Tzuker expressed great satisfaction for our Aermacchi M-346 aircraft
- The 30 aircraft ordered by Israel have been delivered in less than two years
- The Israeli Air Force has already undertaken more than 10,000 flights with the Aermacchi M-346 for a total of 7,500 hours

Rome, 9 June 2016 – CEO and General Manager of Leonardo-Finmeccanica Mauro Moretti recently welcomed Brig. Gen. Shmuel Tzuker of the Israeli Ministry of Defence to the Leonardo - Finmeccanica Venegono Superiore facility in Varese, for delivery of the last of the 30 Aermacchi M-346 aircraft ordered by Israel in 2012. Also present were the Israeli Ambassador to Italy Naor Gilon, and the Head of the Leonardo-Finmeccanica Aircraft Division Filippo Bagnato.

Delivery of the first aircraft to Israel was made in 2014, and in less than two years all 30 aircraft have been delivered to the customer. The Aermacchi M-346s are demonstrating high efficiency and have already undertaken more than 10,000 flights for a total of 7,500 hours.

Mauro Moretti said: "this was an important moment, as Brig. Gen. Tzuker pointed out yesterday, expressing his satisfaction at the choice of our aircraft. The Aermacchi M-346 has established itself in all the major international competitions, and already trains pilots of the Italian, Israeli and Singapore Air Forces, considered amongst the most demanding in the world. Our trainer will now make its debut in Poland and is also a candidate for the US Air Force competition for 350 aircraft."

Brig. Gen. Shmuel Tzuker said: "I would like to thank Leonardo-Finmeccanica and their employees for the excellent industrial performance and for the support they have given to the Israeli Air Force. Israeli pilots are great advocates of the M-346 because the aircraft exceeds our highest expectations."

The contract signed with Israel in 2012 provided for the supply of 30 Aermacchi M-346 aircraft (to replace the A-4 Skyhawk), maintenance, logistics, simulators and training provided in collaboration with other Israeli and international companies, part of a wider agreement between the Italian and Israeli Governments.

Italy, Israel, Singapore and Poland have ordered a total of 68 Aermacchi M-346s, the most advanced training aircraft available on the market today and designed to train pilots for the latest generation military aircraft.

Note

Following the process of the reorganisation of the **Leonardo-Finmeccanica** Group's companies, it should be noted that from January 1st 2016: the "Helicopters" division has absorbed the activities of AgustaWestland; the "Aircraft" division has absorbed part of the activities of Alenia Aermacchi; the "Aero-structures" division has absorbed part of the activities of Alenia Aermacchi; the "Airborne & Space Systems" division has absorbed part of the activities of Selex ES; the "Land & Naval Defence Electronics" division has absorbed part of the activities of Selex ES; the "Security & Information Systems" division has absorbed part of the activities of Selex ES; the "Defence Systems" division has absorbed the activities of OTO Melara and WASS.

Note to editors:

The Aermacchi M-346 is the most advanced lead-in fighter trainer aircraft currently produced, and the only new-generation trainer optimised for pilots who will go on to fly the latest-generation, high-performance military aircraft. Thanks to its advanced technical design and adoption of modern “design-to-cost” and “design-to-maintain” concepts, the M-346 has reduced acquisition and operation costs. Furthermore, reducing the maintenance hours requirement of the aircraft has increased its cost-effectiveness.

The M-346 features innovative design solutions. It is an aircraft with a full-authority quadruplex Fly-by-Wire control system that, thanks to the optimisation of its aerodynamic configuration, allows the aircraft to remain fully controllable at angles of attack of over 30 degrees. This, combined with the aircraft’s twin-engine configuration, the duplication and redundancy of its electric and hydraulic systems and a choice of state-of-the-art equipment, makes the M-346 the most modern pre-operational tactical training aircraft in the world.

The M-346 is equipped with a digital avionics system, fully modelled on those of latest-generation military aircraft such as the Eurofighter, Gripen, Rafale, F-16, F-18, F-22 and the future F-35. It is therefore well-suited for every phase of advanced and pre-operational training, downloading flight hours from the more expensive frontline aircraft.

The M-346’s wide flight envelope, its very high thrust/weight ratio and extreme manoeuvrability make it an aircraft capable of reproducing, for the trainee pilot, flight conditions similar to those they will find on the combat aircraft they will go on to operate, thus maximizing the effectiveness of training.

The M-346 also integrates the ETTS (Embedded Tactical Training Simulation) with the ability to simulate a complete suite of sensors, countermeasures and armaments and also to create a virtual tactical scenario, simulating air, naval and land forces, friend or foe, interacting in real time with the aircraft during the training missions.

The M-346 features hard points, allowing external loads to be carried, as well as a Helmet Mounted Display, vocal commands and an in-flight refuelling probe. The aircraft’s excellent performance, combined with options to install an Electronic Warfare System, Tactical Data Link, Multi-mode Radar and equipment to reduce the aircraft’s radar signature, the M-346 provides high survivability and effectiveness when operating in hostile theatres.

The M-346 Integrated Training System (ITS) includes, alongside the aircraft, an exhaustive Ground Based Training System (GBTS). This enables the student pilot to learn and rehearse the entire aircraft syllabus and training objectives on the ground, before replicating them in flight. This provides significant cost savings when comprehensively training “fast jet” military pilots.

A core element of the ITS is the Live-Virtual-Constructive (LVC), linking simulators to live sorties, allowing pilots flying a training device on the ground to be linked with those flying on real aircraft. It allows trainee pilots to add complexity to training exercises while reducing the risks and costs associated with flying several aircraft during training missions.