

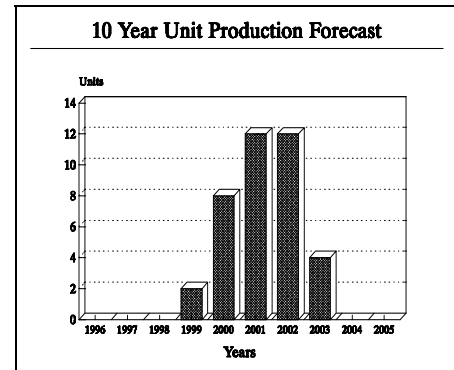
ARCHIVED REPORT

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RAAF Lead-In Fighter Trainer - Archived 2/97

Outlook

- A, Hawk, MB.339 on shortlist; competition appears too close to project winner
- Requirement is for 35-45 aircraft to train future F/A-18 pilots
- Decision expected late 1996, first deliveries in 1999



Orientation

Description. Lead-in fighter for F/A-18 and F-111C pilot and navigator training.

Sponsor. Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).

Contractors. To be selected.

Status. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) issued late 1995; type selection expected in 1996.

Total Produced. None to date.

Application. Lead-in advanced training for transition to F/A-18 combat aircraft.

Price Range. Estimated at \$10-\$15 million, depending on type selection, in 1996 US dollars.

Technical Data

Design Features. Not applicable. See **AERMACCHI MB.339**, **BAe HAWK**, and **McDONNELL DOUGLAS/BAe T-45A** program reviews in this Tab for details.

Variants/Upgrades

Not applicable.

Program Review

Background. Australia's Lead-In Fighter (LIF) competition will result in selection of an advanced trainer to replace the RAAF's aging AerMacchi MB.326s; approximately 35-45 aircraft will be

acquired. These will train pilots and navigators for the air force's F/A-18 and F-111C aircraft. Finalist selection is scheduled for 1996, with initial deliveries to take place in 1999.

According to RAAF officials, the LIF may also serve in the operational role as close air support aircraft; missions could include simulated air-to-surface attacks on naval vessels.

Candidates. The original shortlist consisted of six aircraft. Dassault of France offered a variant of the AlphaJet; Czech manufacturer Aero Vodochody proposed the L-59F; the AerMacchi/Alenia/EMBRAER

team bid its AMX; BAe offered the Hawk 100; McDonnell Douglas, its T-45A; and Italy's AerMacchi, the new MB.339FD. In 1995 Australia dropped Dassault's entry from the competition in protest of France's resumption of nuclear testing in the Pacific, then eliminated Aero's L-59F. The Italo-Brazilian team dropped out, apparently believing that their AMX was too attack-oriented for the requirement.

Funding

Program costs estimated at \$450-\$550 million, depending on type selection.

Analysis. This competition simply appears too close to project a winner. As the US Navy uses the T-45A to train pilots for, among other platforms, the F/A-18, and as this aircraft's avionics and cockpit layout would appear to be highly compatible for instructing future Hornet pilots, the McDonnell Douglas entry may have an edge. However, the T-45A is an expensive aircraft and its selection may possibly result in the purchase of a marginally sufficient quantity of LIF aircraft.

The MB.339, on the other hand, would appear to be the front runner if cost were the driving consideration. The RAAF has operated the venerable MB.326s for many

years and may seek to build on its relationship with the Italian manufacturer. Further, should ANZAC commonality be a prime objective, it should be noted that New Zealand's air force operates MB.339s. On the down side the Italian candidate is powered by the Viper turbojet which, while a well-proven powerplant, cannot be viewed as state-of-the-art.

Finally, there is the Hawk 100, fitting in somewhere between its two rivals. This is not an inexpensive aircraft either and, depending on modifications required for the LIF role, may be redundant in light of the T-45A's candidacy.

Recent Contracts

Not applicable.

Timetable

Late	1994	RAAF shortlisted six candidates
	1995	RFPs issued; shortlist narrowed to three entries
	1996	Finalist selection planned
	1999	Initial deliveries planned
Beyond	2000	Production/deliveries to continue

Worldwide Distribution

Not applicable.

Forecast Rationale

We are not calling out a finalist for the LIF requirement, although we feel the contest is primarily between the T-45A and the MB.339FD.

Based on a type selection decision near the end of 1996, we feel the RAAF's 1999 target date for initial deliveries will be met, regardless of which candidate gets the nod.

We are currently forecasting a buy of 38 LIF aircraft, with final deliveries in 2003. The ultimate quantity procured may well depend on which entrant is chosen.

Ten-Year Outlook

		ESTIMATED CALENDAR YEAR PRODUCTION											Total 96-05
		<u>High Confidence Level</u>				<u>Good Confidence Level</u>				<u>Speculative</u>			
Aircraft	(Engine)	thru 95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	
MANUFACTURER NOT SELECTED													
RAAF LIF TRAINER	NOT SELECTED	0	0	0	0	2	8	12	12	4	0	0	38
Total Production		0	0	0	0	2	8	12	12	4	0	0	38