

# First MC-55A Peregrine Arrives in Australia

BY RICHARD SCOTT

The first of the Australian Defence Force's four MC-55A Peregrine Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Electronic Warfare (ISREW) aircraft has arrived at RAAF Base Edinburgh in South Australia following delivery from L3Harris Technologies' facility in Greenville, Texas.

Based on the Gulfstream G550 business jet, the MC-55A Peregrine is being acquired by Australia under the A\$2.4 billion Project AIR 555 program. The four aircraft, to be operated by 10 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force, are being procured under US Foreign Military Sales cases through the US Air Force's Big Safari program (managed by the 645th Aeronautical Systems Group). L3Harris is prime contractor.

Although based on the G550 airframe, the MC-55A Peregrine represents a complex, developmental program integrating new ISR systems, antennas, power system modifications, communications systems and extensive modifications to the G550 outer mould line. The changes include additional power within the aircraft, modification of the Rolls Royce BR 710-C4-11 engine, and increased cooling.

Arriving at RAAF Edinburgh on January 22, the first MC-55A into Australia still carried its civilian test registration number, N584GA. The aircraft – which transited via Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.; Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii; Wake Island; and Andersen Air Force Base, Guam – is actually the third MC-55A built.

RAAF Base Edinburgh has been designated as the main operating base for the MC-55A fleet. Support facilities will also be established at three forward operating bases: RAAF Base Darwin

in the Northern Territory; RAAF Base Townsville in Queensland; and on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the Indian Ocean.

Project AIR 555 was originally planned to achieve Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in June 2023. However, the program has suffered a series of schedule slippages which have delayed aircraft deliveries and impacted IOC and Final Operational Capability dates. At this stage of the program, the Australian government is unwilling to divulge revised planning assumptions for capability realization.