

Portuguese Jet training

Alan Warnes, assisted by the Maastricht International Aeronautical Society (MIAS), outlines the jet training procedures employed by the Portuguese Air Force.

SINCE 1994 Portuguese Air Force pilot training procedures have been under review, as the men at the ministry endeavour to find the most efficient and cost-effective solution (a problem we in the UK have also encountered).

Initially the student would undertake ten Epsilon flights — but he would only take control of the aircraft once in the air, the instructor sitting in front of him would execute the take-off and landing. Unhappy with this method, it was decided to rent civilian Cessna 152s at Sintra — the military provided pilot support and maintenance and the students each flew 13 complete sorties. However, this scheme was axed and for 1997 screening responsibilities were handed back to Esq 101 and its Epsilons. It now looks set to change again with the introduction of the rejuvenated Chipmunk. Having retired the type in 1990 (the majority of them sold to private owners) the *Força Aérea Portuguesa* (FAP) is now re-introducing the 'Chippie' fitted with a Lycoming 180hp engine. The initial conversion carried out by Windmill Aviation



Above: An F-16A taxis back to the Esq 201 ramp area. (AFM-Alan Warnes)

Right: Four Alpha Jets of Esq 103 in formation over the Portuguese countryside. Note three of the aircraft are fitted with ECM kits on the back seat — affectionately known as R2D2 packs. (Carlo Brummer/MIAS)

