

Lebanon: The Air Force is reborn from its ashes

Contributed by Agencies
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Beirut - November 17 - In preparation for the military parade on November 22 at the national holiday, the Lebanese army is now flying over several regions by the aircraft type Hawker Hunter, a first since the last flight of this type of aircraft in 1988.

Having made its first flight in 1951, a squadron of Hawker Hunter fighter aircraft with British supersonic capabilities was delivered to the Lebanese army in 1959 to be replaced in 1969 by aircraft type French Mirage III.

Since stored, the Hawker Hunter had been used by the Lebanese army in 1983 with an air cover of fighter jets and French units in the U.S. bombardment of positions held by militiamen of the PSP itself supported by units of the Syrian army. A Hawker Hunter had been shot down while the second landed in Cyprus.

Since then, the Mirage III were sold in 1999 to Pakistan while displaying only few hours of flights, the Lebanese Army had tried unsuccessfully again to restore the Hunters in 2007 during its confrontation with the Fatah terrorist splinter group Fatah al Islam in the Nahar al Bared confrontation. 12 aircraft of this type reported stored at the military airport Kleiat in north Lebanon. Bombs originally intended for transportation pylons on the Hawker Hunter had been modified by military engineering units to be dropped from military helicopters (Bell UH-1 Huey's) on the Palestinian camp which was fortified by Yasser Arafat in the late 70s and early 80s, with bunkers capable of withstanding the Israeli aerial bombardment.

While the Lebanese military authorities asked insistently, the donation of fighters to put an end to daily violations of Lebanese airspace by Israeli fighter and the possibility of bombing fortified areas held by armed groups, Tel Aviv's objections have so far led the U.S. authorities to deny that the Lebanese army is equipped with such equipment.

Archive Video Lebanese Air Force (LAF) - Hawker Hunter
{youtube}k8wjygcZUc{/youtube}

Specifications (Hunter F.6)
Data from The Great Book of Fighters[17]

General characteristics

Crew: One
Length: 45 ft 11 in (14.00 m)
Wingspan: 33 ft 8 in (10.26 m)
Height: 13 ft 2 in (4.01 m)
Wing area: 349 ft² (32.42 m²)
Empty weight: 14,122 lb (6,405 kg)
Loaded weight: 17,750 lb (8050 kg)
Max takeoff weight: 24,600 lb (11,158 kg)
Powerplant: 1× Rolls-Royce Avon 207 turbojet, 10,145 lbf (45.13 kN)
Performance

Maximum speed: Mach 0.94, 620 knots (715 mph, 1,150 km/h) at sea level
Combat range: 385 nm (445 mi, 715 km)
Ferry range: 1,650 nm (1,900 mi, 3,060 km) with external fuel
Service ceiling 50,000 ft (15,240 m)
Rate of climb: 17,200 ft/min (87.4 m/s)
Wing loading: 51.6 lb/ft² (251.9 kg/m²)
Thrust/weight: 0.56
Armament

Guns: 4× 30 mm ADEN cannons in a removable gun pack with 150 rounds per gun
Rockets:

4x Matra rocket pods (each with 18x SNEB 68 mm rockets) or
24x Hispano SURA R80 80 mm rockets[18]

Missiles:

Air-to-air missile: 4x AIM-9 Sidewinder

Air-to-surface missile: 4x AGM-65 Maverick

Bombs: 7,400 lb (3,400 kg) of payload on 4x under-wing hardpoints (upgraded Singapore Hunters had 6x under-wing & 1x centreline hardpoint), including a variety of unguided iron bombs and drop tanks for extended range.

Avionics

Ekco Ranging radar