



Northrop F-5E/F Tiger II

Switzerland took delivery of 98 F-5Es and 12 F-5Fs following two separate deals with the USA. The first contract (Peace Alps I), worth SFr 1.17 billion, was signed in 1976, covering the supply of 66 Northrop F-5Es and six F-5Fs. The first 13 F-5Es and all F-5Fs were supplied by Northrop, while the remaining single-seaters were locally assembled by FFA at Emmen. A follow-on batch was ordered in 1981 under the name Peace Alps II, covering the delivery of 32 F-5Es and six F-5Fs.

Now veterans, the Swiss Tigers are in the process of being phased out, and part of the Army XXI programme was the dissolution of Flieger Staffel 1 and 13 at the end of 2003, reducing the fleet from 85 to 54 aircraft in three squadrons. The 12



F-5F twin-seaters are now used primarily in the advanced training and jet conversion role, following the Hawk T.Mk 66's premature retirement (the Hawk's last operational flight took place on 13 December 2002). Ausbildungsstaffel 16 continues to use the F-5F aircraft for ECM training, employing the Vista 5 (Eriqammer A-100) ECM pod. The Swiss Air Force acquired some eight ACMI range instrumentation pods for the F-5E for training at the ranges in Switzerland.

Interest has been shown by the Philippines to buy the surplus aircraft, but a more realistic customer could be the Força Aérea Brasileira, which has shown interest in buying 15 F-5Es and having RUAG convert them into two-seaters, boosting its small fleet of instructional aircraft. A first real customer is the Naval Air Systems Command Headquarters, Patuxent River, Maryland, which is procuring up to 32 low-houred F-5Es in a fixed-price contract estimated at \$18,557,950. The base award of \$570,950 is for the initial requirement of one aircraft, whereby the contract consists of a basic award and five options. These F-5Es will provide a one-for-one replacement of current US Navy Reserve F-5Es. If all options are exercised, the work will be completed in September 2007. The first F-5E (J-3026) was airlifted onboard a US Navy C-130 to the USA on 1 May 2003.

The 'Patrouille Suisse' has been the official jet aerobatic team of the Swiss Air Force since its formation in 1964, initially operating the Hawker Hunter, but after 30 years of shows, the 'Patrouille Suisse' flew its last Hunter display in 1994. Replacement came in the shape of the faster and more manoeuvrable F-5E. All the members of the 'Patrouille Suisse' are professional military pilots from the Surveillance Wing and practise this additional task together during the respective air show season only. A display lasts approximately 18 minutes and is always closely monitored from the ground by the commanding officer. In 2004 the 'Patrouille Suisse' celebrates its 40th anniversary.

