

Croats capture aircraft at Udbina

CROATIA'S OPERATION to recover Krajina, code-named *Storm*, has netted large quantities of military material, including a quantity of aircraft at the Udbina air base, which will now be used by the Croatian Air Force. Croatian Army sources gave the following breakdown of aircraft.

"The aircraft that were left in the hangars and concrete shelters of the military airport at Udbina may be the most important part of the Croatian Army captured after Operation *Storm*. There are ten fighter aircraft — G-4 Super Galebs, G-2 Galebs, and J-1 Jastrebs. As soon as the technical documentation is complete, these will become part of the combat and training system of the Croatian air force. It is estimated that this will be in two or three months.

"The best of these are certainly the G-4 Super Galebs. In the opinion of many experts, this is an exceptionally successful product of the former Yugoslav aircraft industry, which used to go for export. As early as in 1990 12 G-4s were sold to Myanmar (Burma).

"It was precisely this type of aircraft that the Croatian Air Force lacked in a close tactical support role to infantry, since the use of MiG-21s had not turned out to be the best solution in such a role.

"The Super Galeb is a slower, but much more manoeuvrable aircraft, much better at avoiding anti-aircraft guns and shoulder-

launched surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). "Even more important than the combat use of Super Galeb is that it is suitable for training pilots, for which the Croatian Air Force was mostly using the piston-engined Utva-75, deployed at the Zadar Education Centre. With the capture of the G-4s the greatest technical problem in training new pilots, particularly in the transition from piston-engined to light jets, has been solved.

"Moreover, with the arms embargo, Croatia could not buy jet trainers and could not successfully train new generations of fighter pilots.

"Several J-1 Jastreb light attack aircraft were also captured at Udbina Airport. The former Yugoslav Air Force had about 150 Jastrebs in 12 squadrons. After the production of the J-22 Orao ground attack aircraft began, the Yugoslav Air Force gradually started withdrawing the Jastrebs from operational use.

"Apart from napalm bombs, shells and ammunition or machine guns, about 100 British-produced BL-755 cluster bombs were also found in the warehouses near Udbina Airport. These are used to destroy enemy manpower in open areas. These bombs, each of which costs about £8,000, can be used to arm the Super Galebs.

"The weapons and ammunition captured during Operation *Storm* are a real contribution to the Croatian Army's technical equipment."

Germans join Deny Flight



14 Luftwaffe Tornados have deployed to Piacenza Air Base in Italy to join Operation Deny Flight. They include six from AFG 51 based at Schleswig-Jagel tasked for reconnaissance (Above), and eight HARM-carrying Tornado ECRs from JBG 32 at Lechfeld (Below) finished in the latest grey scheme. (Photos Bigolin Diego)



Lebanese Hueys

SOME 16 BELL UH-1H Iroquois helicopters were officially handed-over to the Lebanese Army on July 26 at the Yarze landing strip near the Defence Ministry in East Beirut.

The fully-refurbished helicopters, bought from US Army surplus stocks, represent the first batch of aircraft to be delivered to replace those destroyed during 15 years of civil war between 1975 and 1990. In addition, Israeli and Syrian attacks all but wiped out military aviation in the country.

Negotiations are underway for a further batch of 16 UH-1s and later, fixed wing aircraft. Beirut reportedly paid \$100,000 each for the helicopters, only 10% of their true cost, as the USA is providing equipment at concessionary rates to help the Air Force restructure.

The Hueys will be used for internal security, transport, fire fighting and emergency evacuation missions. Some 12 Aéropatiale Gazelle and IAR

Puma helicopters survived the war, but have been grounded since 1992 due to lack of spares. They are to now be refurbished together with three elderly Hawker Hunter F.70s, the Air Force's only combat aircraft.

Thai Navy get first A-7s

The Royal Thai Navy's first two A-7 Corsairs, both two-seat TA-7Es, were delivered in late July.

A total of 14 single-seat and four twin-seat Corsairs are due for delivery at the rate of two per month with the last examples due early next year while three more have been acquired purely for spares use.

Based at Satahup/U Tapao Naval Air Station, they provide the Navy with its first fixed-wing combat aircraft and will be used primarily for maritime strike operations.

Air Defence Tucano



Above: EMB-312H Super Tucano PP-ZTF, development aircraft for the ALX seen at Embraer's company airfield carrying rocket pods, and for the first time the MAA-1 Piranha air-to-air missile. (Malcolm English)