

The Historical Perspective

The Air at Yelahanka



Various aircraft types seen at AFS Yelahanka, including the Mi-8, Chetak and Antonov An-32

AFS Yelahanka, where the biennial Aero India international air shows have been held since the 1990s, is nearing its Platinum Jubilee since its establishment in the 1940s. Joseph Antony recalls its chequered history.

Air Force Station Yelahanka (AFSY) is located on the NH-7 from Bangalore to Bellary/Hyderabad. The airfield has had an association of over 75 years with military Aviation in India since its inception in the 1940s to the present time. It is the alma mater through whose portals most transport and helicopter pilots of the IAF have graduated over the past fifty years. Having first visited the airfield almost 52 years ago (when my father was an instructor pilot based there) and thereafter during various Aero India shows, I thought it fit to compile some of its aviation related history.

During World War II, the Italian Tenth Army under the command of Marshal Rodolfo Graziani had made inroads from Libya into Egypt in September 1940, only to be beaten back by a much smaller Allied force under General Sir Archibald Wavell, British Commander-in-Chief, Middle Eastern forces in February 1941. Over 130,000 Italians were taken Prisoners of War (POWs) after five Italian Divisions were mauled in two days of fighting. Later, more Italians became POWs as their forces were comprehensively defeated in North



File picture of de Havilland Mosquito



File picture of Spitfire Mk.VIII