

VAYU on-the-spot report

Visit to the Heritage Flight, AFS Hindon From 'Vintage Aircraft Flight' to 'Heritage Flight'



Dakota DC-3 (Photo: Angad Singh)

Air Force Station Hindon (under the Western Air Command) in Ghaziabad on the outskirts of New Delhi is home to the Indian Air Force's Heritage Flight. It is the biggest and largest airbase in Asia. Hindon Airport, also spelled Hindan Airport, is a commercial domestic airport and an Indian Air Force base in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India, operated by the Airports Authority of India at Hindan Air Force Station of the Indian Air Force. It is the second commercial airport serving the National Capital Region after Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi (though civil flights have temporarily been suspended). The annual Air Force Day parade was held here for over two decades before moving out to other parts of India. This military airbase is home to a number of squadrons that include Heritage Flight plus C-17s, C-130s, Mi-17s etc.

Heritage Flight (initially Vintage Aircraft Flight) was established in 1988 at Air Force Station Palam to showcase the IAF's rich history. The name 'Vintage Aircraft Flight' to the 'Heritage Flight' changed in 2020. The Heritage

Flight is carried out ceremonial flypasts on occasions such as Republic Day, Air Force Day parades and airshows. As of now, the Heritage Flight operates the Tiger Moth, Harvard and Dakota; two more vintage aircraft are slated to join soon!

Current aircraft at Heritage Flight, AFS Hindon

Dakota DC-3 (VP-905, Parashurama): "The Dakota is the reason why Poonch is still with us". The first aircraft to take-off and land at Srinagar was Dakota VP-905 piloted by Wg Cdr KL Bhatia, CO of 12 Sqn AF and it carried the first batch of troops of 1 Sikh Regiment under the command of Lt Col Dewan Ranjit Rai. This signalled the start of the 1947-48 Indo-Pak war and the rest, as they say, is history.

The Dakota played a stellar role in the 1962 Sino-India War where it was used extensively for transportation of troops and logistics. During the 1971 Indo-Pak war the