

Patrouille Suisse



The Patrouille Suisse is an aerobatic team of the Swiss Air Force. The team flies six Northrop F-5E Tiger II fighter jets. It was founded on 22 August 1964 with four Hawker Hunters. Two displays were also flown in 1968 with the Dassault Mirage III under the name “Patrouille de Suisse Mirage”. Other than those shows the Patrouille Suisse retained the Hunter. In 1970, a fifth aircraft was added to the team, followed by the sixth shortly thereafter. In 1977 a smoke system was introduced. The Patrouille Suisse flew its Hawker Hunters for the last time in 1994 and transitioned to the faster and more maneuverable Northrop F-5E Tiger II adding smoke systems in 1996. In April the following year, a Pilatus PC-6 Porter single engine turboprop light aircraft was assigned as a support aircraft, painted in the team’s colour scheme.

In February 2013, the Swiss Minister of Defence, Ueli Maurer, stated that the Patrouille Suisse would be disbanded by early 2016 due to the withdrawal of the F-5 from service. The Swiss parliament decided not to purchase 22 Gripen E replacement aircraft. In summer of 2014, the Swiss Air Force released plans to move from six F-5Es to four F/A-18Cs by the end of 2016. To facilitate these reduced operations, fewer air displays would be flown and, as a result, the aircraft were unlikely to receive special paint. The Swiss Air Force and the Swiss parliament planned to extend the service of eighteen F-5E and four F-5F until 2018. This would also include the continued operation of the Patrouille Suisse flying the F-5E until 2018. A unique Flight Demonstration was performed by the Patrouille Suisse on 7 September 2014 at the Air Show at Payerne Air Base as they flew a 15-plane display with the PC-7 Team.

The Patrouille Suisse normally operates six Northrop F-5E Tiger II aircraft out of a total of twelve F-5Es that are maintained in team colours. Since 1996 ten aircraft



are able to accept one of the eight smoke generators that were made by RUAG. When fitted with a smoke generator, including the two 40 litres (8.8 imp gal; 11 US gal) bottles of diesel, the right gun of the F-5E is disabled. The teams F-5Es are also used for other purposes such as training and as target tugs flown by Target Squadron 12, facilitated by their high visibility colouring. A Pilatus PC-6 V-622 “Felix”, painted in Patrouille Suisse colours, transports the commander, announcer and the team ground crew.

About 60th Anniversary Patrouille Suisse

The Swiss Aviation Force, celebrated its 60th anniversary on 22 August 2024. Established in 1964,