

The sharp claw of the Turkish Air Force: Eagle Squadron



The 161. “Kartal/Eagle” Filo, established on in 1952. The 161st Squadron was introduced to jet aircraft in 1952. Initially receiving F-84G aircraft, the Squadron replaced them on 25 December 1965, with the first batch of 21 F-5 Freedom Fighter aircraft acquired from the United States.

On 26 November 1966, six of the other aircraft in a batch acquired to establish a second F-5 squadron were assigned to the 161st Squadron Command. These aircraft were flown from the USA by six pilots serving in the squadron. Covering a distance of 15,348 kilometres in 21 hours, the pilots became the first Turkish pilots to fly across the Atlantic Ocean.

The Squadron was modernised in 1983 with F-104G “Starfighters”. On 19 June 1992, the 161 Filo was modernised with F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft.