

# Grupo Aéreo 4 de Caza

## Argentina's fighter school

Photographed by Marnix Sap



### Mendoza memories



**Dassault Mirage IIICJ** (above)  
From their delivery from Israel in late 1982/early 1983 to 1991, 19 Mirage IIICJs and three IIIBs were flown from Mendoza by the newly-created Escuadrón 55, established in memory of the 55 FAA servicemen who lost their lives in the Guerra del Atlántico Sur (Falklands War) in 1982. The unit functioned as the Mirage operational conversion unit.

**Douglas A-4C Skyhawk** (below)  
Grupo 4's Escuadrón I operated all 25 A-4Cs delivered to Argentina, while the group's other squadrons flew the F-86F Sabre and MS.760. Grupo 4 Skyhawks were sent to San Julian during the Falklands/Malvinas War, losing nine aircraft to enemy action during the conflict. Soon after, Grupo 4's seven survivors were transferred to Grupo 5 to join the A-4B survivors. This preserved aircraft, complete with ship 'kill' marking, wears the badges of both units.



### Escuadrón I - MS.760 Paris

The Fuerza Aérea Argentina acquired 48 MS.760s to operate in the advanced/weapons training role. Of a total, 36 were assembled locally by DINFA (Dirección Nacional de Fabricaciones e Investigaciones Aeronáuticas). The first Paris to fly in Argentina was A-01, the third French-built aircraft. By September 1959 three were in service at El Plumerillo, and soon after the serial block changed to E-201 onwards. The Paris also served with the Escuela de Aviación Militar at Córdoba, but in 1967 the surviving fleet was concentrated in the Escuela de Caza (Grupo 4) at El Plumerillo. The weapons training role was assumed by the IA-63 Pampa from 1990.

Today, Escuadrón I (also known as the Escuadrón Operativo) operates 10 MS.760s, and is the last military user of the Paris in the world. Eight of the aircraft are in 'standard' configuration and are often fitted with two 7.62-mm machine-guns in the nose and a 150-kg (331-lb) bomb under each wing. Having lost their fighter lead-in training role, they are used mainly as a 'holding' squadron for pilots awaiting a place on the Pampa course. Two MS.760s are in 'Manguero' configuration, used for towing banner targets. For this role they have orange-painted nose tails and wing tanks.

In 1999 the Paris clocked up 40 years of service, and the first aircraft delivered, E-201, was given a special commemorative scheme (below). Although threat of retirement has hung over the Paris on several occasions in the past, it is now expected that they will serve until 2003.

