



de Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter (above)

Alongside the King Air, a camera-equipped DHC-6-300 Twin Otter is operated exclusively by the Flugdienst und Koordinationsstelle für Luftaufnahmen (KSL) of the Federal Office of Topography, with the crew drawn from the RLA. In March 2003 the civil registration (HB-LID) was changed for a military serial as military control facilitates aircraft and equipment certification. The aircraft can be fitted with the same camera fit as the 350C, albeit with a GPS receiver Leica SR-9500. Camera control is provided by the ASCOT (Aerial Survey Control Tool).



Ranger ADS-95 (left)

Operated by Drohnenabteilung 7, Ranger ADS-95 drones are used for reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition, target designation, electronic intelligence and radio relay. Replacing the earlier ADS-90 prototype system, four systems – each equipped with seven drones – were produced by a consortium of Oerlikon-Contraves, SF Schweizerische Unternehmung für Flugzeuge und Systeme (now RUAG), Israel Aircraft Industries and Tadiran in 1995, a project worth SFr 350 million. Powered by a 38-hp (28-kW) engine, the skid-equipped drone is catapulted in full auto-pilot mode by its hydro-pneumatic launcher, after which it can reach an altitude topping 18,000 ft (5486 m) with a mission range of up to 93 miles (150 km). Standard payload is the Multimission Optronic Stabilised Payload (MOSP) Mk III with auto-track capability providing real time, day and night information. Various other configurations with TV, FLIR, Combi TV/FLIR, and TV or FLIR with laser designator are also possible.



Dassault Mirage IIIRS

On 4 August 1965, the first of 18 Mirage IIIRS arrived in Switzerland, direct from Dassault. Another 17 aircraft were assembled at Emmen. In 1994, under the ISMA (Improved Swiss Mirage Aircraft) programme, the IIIRS fleet received locally developed canards, modern RWR, chaff and flare systems, new ejection seats, improved avionics and infra-red camera pods.

After 38 years of service, the era of the 'Amir' (Aufklärer-Mirage) and remaining trainers came to an end on 17 December 2003 during a formal farewell ceremony and flypast at Dübendorf. The 'Amir' fleet accumulated 55,000 flight hours. In its last months, the last European squadron to operate the Mirage III – Fliegerstaffel 10 – painted two aircraft in special schemes designed by Hansueli Oberholzer (who also created the 'Patrouille Suisse' scheme). These were 'Black' (illustrated) and 'White'. Flieger Staffel 10 was disbanded, and in January 2004 its parent unit – Ressort Luftaufklärung (RLA) – was renamed Fachdienst Luftaufklärung. With the Mirage's retirement, the Schweizer Luftwaffe will be without any fast-jet reconnaissance capability for the foreseeable future.