



Finnish Air Force



BAE Systems Hawk Mk 66

Photo: Finnish Air Force

The BAE Systems Hawk Mk 66 is the Swiss export version of the British single-engined two-seat jet trainer. The Finnish Air Force operates 16 pre-owned Mk 66s bought from the Swiss Air Force in 2007. The aircraft entered service in 2011–2013.

The Mk 66s are used for fast jet and tactical flight training. They operate alongside the Mk 51s and Mk 51As purchased, respectively, in the early 1980s and mid-1990s.

Prior to introduction into service the Mk 66s underwent a modification program that involved a glass cockpit and HUD display upgrades and installation of a mission planning and recording system. The work was carried out by Patria Aviation. Some legacy Hawks have also been provided with these improvements.

In addition, a number of system modifications rendered the former Swiss aircraft more compatible with the Hawk Mk 51 and Mk 51A in the pilot training role.

Like the legacy Hawks, the Mk 66s have been allocated the Finnish military designation HW, but will retain the red-and-white color scheme of their previous operator.

The sourcing of the low-hour and impeccably maintained Swiss aircraft will guarantee continued Hawk operations in the Finnish Air Force into the 2030s. In 2015, the Air Force has an upgraded fleet of sixteen Mk 66s, seven Mk 51As, and one Mk 51.



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History and development

The Swiss Air Force received its Hawks in 1989–1991. Following a practise adopted by British Aerospace, the aircraft were given a customer designation Mk 66. Most of the aircraft were assembled in Switzerland.

In 2002, the Swiss Air Force elected to withdraw its Hawks from training use concurrently with the revamp of the service's flight training system, and the aircraft were stored.

After the purchase in 2007, the Mk 66s were trucked to Finland with the last shipment arriving in August 2008. They were inspected, restored to airworthy condition, and given the cockpit upgrades, and they also received other modifications.

Compared with the Mk 51 and Mk 51A, minor differences were discovered in the power plant and weapon systems. These need to be recognized during maintenance, but their effect on flight characteristics are negligible. Like the Mk 51, the Mk 66 can also carry air sampling pods.

Technical data

Wing span: 9.39 m

Length: 11.85 m

Height: 4.00 m

Empty weight: 3,635 kg

Maximum operating weight: 7,347 kg

Structure: All-metal

Power plant: One Rolls-Royce Turboméca Adour 861 bypass engine rated at 2,587 kp (25.35 kN) thrust

Maximum speed: 1,013 km/h

Ceiling: 14,000 m

Armament: 30 mm Aden gun in underfuselage pod, provision for infra-red missiles on wing pylons

Systems and equipment: Air sampling pods, glass cockpit with moving map display, mission planning and recording system.

In service with the Finnish Air Force: 16

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