

SEVERAL UNITS within the Turkish Land Forces Command, also known as the Turkish Army, were involved in the attempted military coup on July 15/16. While Turkish Air Force F-16s flying from Ankara-Akinci and Diyarbakir, as well as KC-135s based at Incirlik, were heavily involved, the coup plotters also used Army Aviation Command helicopters.

AH-1 Cobra helicopters based at Ankara-Güvercinlik, as well as Black Hawks, Hueys and Cougars attacked several military and political targets – including the Parliamentary Palace, the headquarters of the Turkish National Intelligence Organisation (MIT), satellite operator Türksat in Gölbaşı and a number of police facilities such as the Special Operations Command at Ankara-Gölbaşı.

Some arrived from Samandıra/Istanbul carrying Special Forces troops and joined with others from Gazimir/Izmir at Cigli airbase where some Combat Search and Rescue troops boarded. They flew

to Marmaris and during the attack; they tried refueling in Bodrum Imsik and Dalaman airports.

The Cougar and Black Hawk helicopters deployed Special Forces supporting the coup attempt, to a hotel where President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was staying at the time of the coup attempt.

The plotters deployed large numbers of troops and heavy armour in Istanbul and Turkey's capital, Ankara – where Turkish Air Force F-16s executed show-of-force flights and strafed the cities at low level with full afterburners deployed. Some even dropped bombs on key government buildings in broad daylight.

After only a few hours it was clear the plotters did not have the anticipated support for the coup, and forces loyal to President Erdoğan took back control of the situation before dawn – heavily supported

by civilians who went to the streets when he asked them to.

Within hours, almost 3,000 military personnel



Big Hopes

But What Now?

Weeks before July's attempted coup in Turkey, **Marco Dijkshoorn** and **Dirk Jan de Ridder** visited the Güvercinlik-based Army Aviation School, gaining exclusive access to the facility for an overview of Turkish Army Aviation Command.





A short history of Turkish Army Aviation

THE KARA Ordu's Topçu Havacılığı, or Army Artillery Aviation section, was formed in 1948 when officers from artillery regiments were sent to the Türk Hava Kurumu (THK), or Turkish Aeronautical Association, for flying training.

The THK is a civilian organisation set up in 1925 by Turkey's first president, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, to promote interest in aviation, and it's still very active today. Initially the Topçu Okulu Hava Grubu, or Artillery School Air Group, operated from Polatlı, but in 1958 the Army Aviation Headquarters and Flying School moved to Ankara's former civil airfield, Ankara-Güvercinlik. A year later the Flying School was renamed the Kara Havacılık Okulu, or Army Flying School.

The aviation component became increasingly important, and from 2003 Turkish Army Aviation Command went through a drastic reorganisation, gaining the status of an independent command reporting directly to Army HQ.

Four Air Regiments (Hava Alay) were created at Ankara-Güvercinlik, Malatya-Tulga, Izmir-Gazimur and Istanbul-Samandıra. The Army Aviation Command also utilises subordinate units that operate from satellite locations.



Recruiting new pilots

To sustain the Army Aviation Command, new soldiers are recruited constantly. With a high operational tempo in Turkey, there's a constant need for qualified and certified pilots, not only in the Army but also from other air arms that train with it.

Each year 300 to 400 recruits apply for a pilot position in the Army but, after being subjected to the Pilot Selection System (PSS), an average of only 140 start basic flying training. The number is determined not only by the outcome of the PSS, but also because the Army Aviation School is always operating at full flight capacity to meet the Army's needs, with Güvercinlik unable to host any more flights.

Before recruits are allowed to enrol in any of the School's classes they first have to graduate from the Army College, where they undergo tests in flight simulators to determine their piloting skills – the PSS having selected the candidates who can enrol, but without advising on which careers they should pursue.

All students have to follow the same basic training course, which first involves flying the fixed-wing Cessna T182T as well as the AB206R helicopter – and later the UH-1H/AB205 Huey, T-42A and Cessna 421B.



Above: The AH-1W Cobra fleet is a moderate size, but forms the backbone of the attack helicopter force, a role that will eventually be passed to the T129A. More than 16 examples of the new helicopter had been delivered by the middle of this year. All images by authors unless stated.

had been detained and 2,745 judges removed from duty. Many more would follow in the days after the coup's failure.

The Army and the Air Force continue to be purged in the aftermath, with footage of detained high-ranking officers and foot-soldiers shown on television. It's hard to say what the longer-term implications of the purge will be, so this article focuses on the situation from just before the coup attempt began.

Ankara moves in – Aviation School moves out

With more than 100 flights a day on average, the relatively small area of Güvercinlik air base buzzes with activity. Given its close proximity to the ever-expanding city of Ankara, the flights put pressure on the

local environment, so specific training areas for tactical flying were sought further afield and forward operating bases (FOBs) are used to relieve Güvercinlik.

To reduce some of the pressure, Turkish Army Aviation commanders opted to move the School to Isparta Süleyman Demirel, 200 miles (320km) southwest of Ankara. Isparta is ideally located: surrounded by mountains and with the Mediterranean only 72 miles (115km) to the south, all sorts of training scenarios can be played out without putting pressure on the local population.

The Turkish Army's Mountain Commando School is also located here, which makes for realistic training. The plans to move the Army Aviation School away from Ankara were confirmed around 2010 and the work is now under



'Free play' during a high-speed, low-flying pass by a (T)AH-1P. Aircrews have an opportunity to demonstrate such skills when the Army Aviation School completes its training sortie requirements, despite the airfield's close proximity to the city centre.

way to make the move a reality.

"Ankara and the surrounding areas are not ideal for nap-of-the-earth (NOE) low-level flying whereby geographical features are used as cover," said Brigadier-General Unsal Coşkun, the highest-ranking officer at Güvercinlik.

He added: "Koçoğlu Group was hired as the prime contractor for the redevelopment and to build the new infrastructure at Isparta Süleyman Demirel Airport. Our move to Isparta will bring a lot of possibilities for tactical flying training like NOE and night-vision goggle (NVG) training in a far less light-polluted area."

Currently the small aerodrome at Temeli, 25 miles (40km) southwest of Ankara, is used for NOE and NVG training, but once the School has moved to Isparta, FOBs that serve specific purposes will be used and, if necessary, built from scratch.

Since the start of the building process in 2012, a new runway



Above: On the night of July 15, AH-1s played a significant part in the coup-attempt. They attacked numerous government buildings including the National Intelligence Agency headquarters in Ankara. **Below:** Two AH-1Ps fly in a loose formation as they transit to a local training area. The Cobra in the foreground wears a new camouflage scheme that is slowly being introduced across the attack helicopter fleet.

Below: The Assault Helicopter Battalion at Ankara-Güvercinlik operates two squadrons of AH-1P Cobra helicopters.



has been constructed, parallel to the current one used by the civilian airport. As part of the \$150m project, Koçoğlu is undertaking the construction of the Army Aviation Command headquarters building, three hangars (for helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft), four helipads, two runways, a maintenance centre and other educational buildings and dormitories.

The building project is in full swing and is expected to be completed this year. That's the plan, but the current political situation might well push the date back.

Only the Army Aviation School will move to Isparta. All other operational units at Güvercinlik, including their helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, plus the Jandarma (Turkish Gendarmerie force) helicopter command, will remain at the base – where, because most of the flying has been by the Aviation School, its move will reduce environmental pressure.

Taking account of lessons learned at Güvercinlik, a number of changes have been incorporated in the construction of the airfield layout at Isparta. It will have more helicopter landing pads, enabling more concurrent training flights, and also has two auto-rotation panels, only one being available at Güvercinlik.

The move to Isparta means the Army Aviation School will be able to host and train more students, although the number of aircraft at the School's disposal will stay the same.

Meanwhile, given the new and more diverse training environment Isparta provides, the flight training syllabus will be changed to include flights over the sea and tactical flying as part of the Basic Rotor Wing Pilot Course.

And, so that it doesn't interfere with civil aviation traffic using the adjacent Süleyman Demirel airport, the Army Aviation School will have its own Controlled Traffic Region (CTR), with a dedicated control tower overlooking the helipads and the runway.

Although more are needed, there are already two FOBs in the vicinity of Isparta – Çardak, a Turkish Air Force reserve base 38 miles (60km) to the east of Isparta; and another further afield.

Some 156 miles (250km) southwest of Isparta is Bodrum



Helicopters

(Agusta-)Bell 206R Jet Ranger

Twenty AB206B-3 training helicopters ordered in 1996 were later upgraded, receiving the local AB206R designation. In 1998, 13 refurbished Jandarma AB206Rs were taken on charge by the Army Aviation School to supplement the existing fleet.

The Jet Rangers are the primary helicopter training platform, and all students start their basic rotary course on the type.

Bell (T)AH-1P Cobra, AH-1W Super Cobra

The first dedicated attack helicopters to be delivered to Turkey were ten new AH-1W Super Cobras, which arrived between 1990 and 1994 under a US Foreign Military Sales programme. Owing to delayed operational capabilities of the T129A, the Government decided to request three ex-US Marine Corps AH-1Ws to augment the then serviceable fleet of six Super Cobras. They arrived in 2012.

The T129A ATAKs will replace the AH-1P assault helicopters. The T129As are currently flying combat operations against the PKK in the southeastern province of Siirt and in the Hakkari and Van regions.
Hans Rolink



Above: The Army Aviation School operates the AB206R Jet Ranger in the pilot training role. It's the first helicopter that students will fly before, if successful, moving on to types such as the Huey and Cougar.

In the meantime, Turkey sought more attack helicopters and training platforms, gradually acquiring 30 surplus US Army AH-1S, AH-1P and TAH-1P Cobras. They arrived in four batches supplied under FMS – seven AH-1Ps on June 3, 1993; seven more AH-1Ps on August 16, 1993; 12 AH-1Ss on March 5, 1995; and four TAH-1P training platforms on March 29, 1995.

The Cobra fleet later went through an upgrade programme supported by Israeli Aircraft Industries, receiving improved weaponry, navigation and self-defence systems. More recently, ASELSAN fitted the Cobra and Super Cobra fleets with a self-defence suite consisting of the EADS Missile Launch Detection System (MILDS) produced under licence by ASELSAN as well as chaff and flare dispensers. The AH-1Ps are to be replaced by the T129.

Bell UH-1H and Agusta-Bell 205 Iroquois

The Turkish Army took on 70 Italian-built Agusta-Bell 205 Huey helicopters between 1968 and 1985. From 1982 onwards, the US started delivering ex-US Army Bell UH-1H Hueys and by 1986 some 100 were on charge, of which 60 were newly built kits locally assembled by the 901st Hava Araçları Ana Depo ve Fabrika Komutanlığı at Ankara Güvercinlik.

The Hueys underwent the HeliMod I and HeliMod II programmes, when they received avionic and communication systems upgrades and more powerful engines.

"The T129 is very different from the A129 Mangusta. [It] is a third-generation attack helicopter, and its electro-optical systems and diverse armament package provide unique capabilities which require many different skills from the pilots."

Under HeliMod II, they were given the EADS/ASELSAN MILDS self-defence system and the ASELSAN ÖZİŞİK Countermeasure Dispensing System/Chaff and Flare Decoy (CMDS/CFD).

Boeing CH-47F Chinook

In December 2009, the SSM requested the Foreign Military Sale of 14 CH-47F Chinooks, four of which will be equipped for combat search and rescue (CSAR) and special operations. The contract for the delivery of the first six aircraft was signed in 2013.

The \$3.4 billion multi-year deal was followed by a \$131m order signed in September 2015, taking the total acquisition to date to 11.

A first group of 20 pilots trained at Fort Rucker, Alabama, and graduated in mid-2016. The first five helicopters are expected to be absorbed by the Army Aviation Command. Five will be in a special operations configuration, operated by Özel Hava Grup (Special Air Group Command), and one will be operated for the Genelkurmay (General Staff) in the VIP transport role.

The first three CH-47Fs arrived on July 14 at Izmir, Turkey, after being test flown at Summit Airport in Middletown, Delaware. They are painted in a recently adopted green/sand/black colour scheme.

Eurocopter AS532UL Cougar / Airbus Helicopters H215M

Twenty Eurocopter-produced AS532UL Cougar medium-lift helicopters have been delivered to the Turkish Army since 1996



Above: An S-70A-28D Black Hawk conducts mountain flying training in an area near Ankara. Once the Army Aviation Command moves to Isparta, such training opportunities will be undertaken far more regularly for aircrews.

under the Phoenix I programme, the \$225m contract for which was signed in 1993. Four years later, Turkish Aerospace Industries signed the Phoenix II contract with Eurocopter for the joint production of 30 AS532 Cougars, of which the Turkish Army has received ten.

The consortium between TUSAŞ Aerospace Industries Inc and Eurocopter, known as EUROTAI, completed deliveries of the ten (some of which were in SAR and ambulance configuration) by 2003. Under the HeliMod I and HeliMod II programmes, the Cougars have had avionics, self-defence and communication systems upgrades.

Sikorsky S-70A-28D Black Hawk

In December 1998, the SSM signed

a direct-sale contract with Sikorsky for 52 Black Hawk helicopters – 22 in the analogue S-70A-28A version and 30 (to follow from 2000) in the S-70A-28D digital configuration. The Army received its first ones in 1999, some of which were delivered to the Special Forces.

Under Project Yarasa (Bat), signed in mid-2002, all analogue helicopters were upgraded to -28D standard by TAI and ASELSAN. Five D-models were converted to CSAR standard and are designated S-70A-28DSAR. Each Aviation Regiment has a SAR Flight with one S-70-28DSAR on quick reaction alert around the clock.

Under the HeliMod programme, a number of Army and Jandarma Black Hawks have been upgraded and fitted with the ASELSAN HEWS system, a locally developed, fully integrated electronic warfare self-protection suite.

It comprises a radar warning receiver (RWR), missile warning system (MWS) and laser warning receiver (LWR) as well as countermeasures sub-systems including radio frequency (RF) jamming equipment, chaff/flare dispensers and infra-red (IR) countermeasures.

TAI/AgustaWestland T129A/B ATAK

In September 2007, the SSM announced an order for 50 T129 ATAK armed reconnaissance helicopters to be built by a consortium of Turkish Aerospace Industries and AgustaWestland (now Leonardo – Helicopter Division).

An option for 41 more helicopters was taken up in the contract but the Army had an almost instant requirement for them and decided to order nine slightly less capable Erken Duhul Helikopteri (EDH or Early Delivery Helicopters) in November 2010. These were designated T129As and are part of the option package, leaving the order for the advanced T129B version at 50.

The EDH variant is armed with a 20mm cannon and can fire unguided rockets, but not precision-guided munitions. Eventually the EDHs will be upgraded to T129B specification.

Starting in 2011, the first 27 T129 pilots were trained at the Italian Army training centre Centro Addestrativo Aviazione dell'Esercito at Viterbo, Italy, which operates 60 A129C/CBT Mangusta helicopters, devised the training syllabus for the Turkish pilots, after whose graduation the training was taken over by the main contractor for the T129, TAI.

Training on the type is now conducted at Malatya, where all the ATAK helicopters are concentrated. Major Ahmet Okur, an experienced T129 instructor pilot, noted: "The T129 is very different from the A129 Mangusta. [It] is a third-generation attack helicopter, and its electro-optical systems and diverse armament package provide unique capabilities which require many different skills from the pilots."





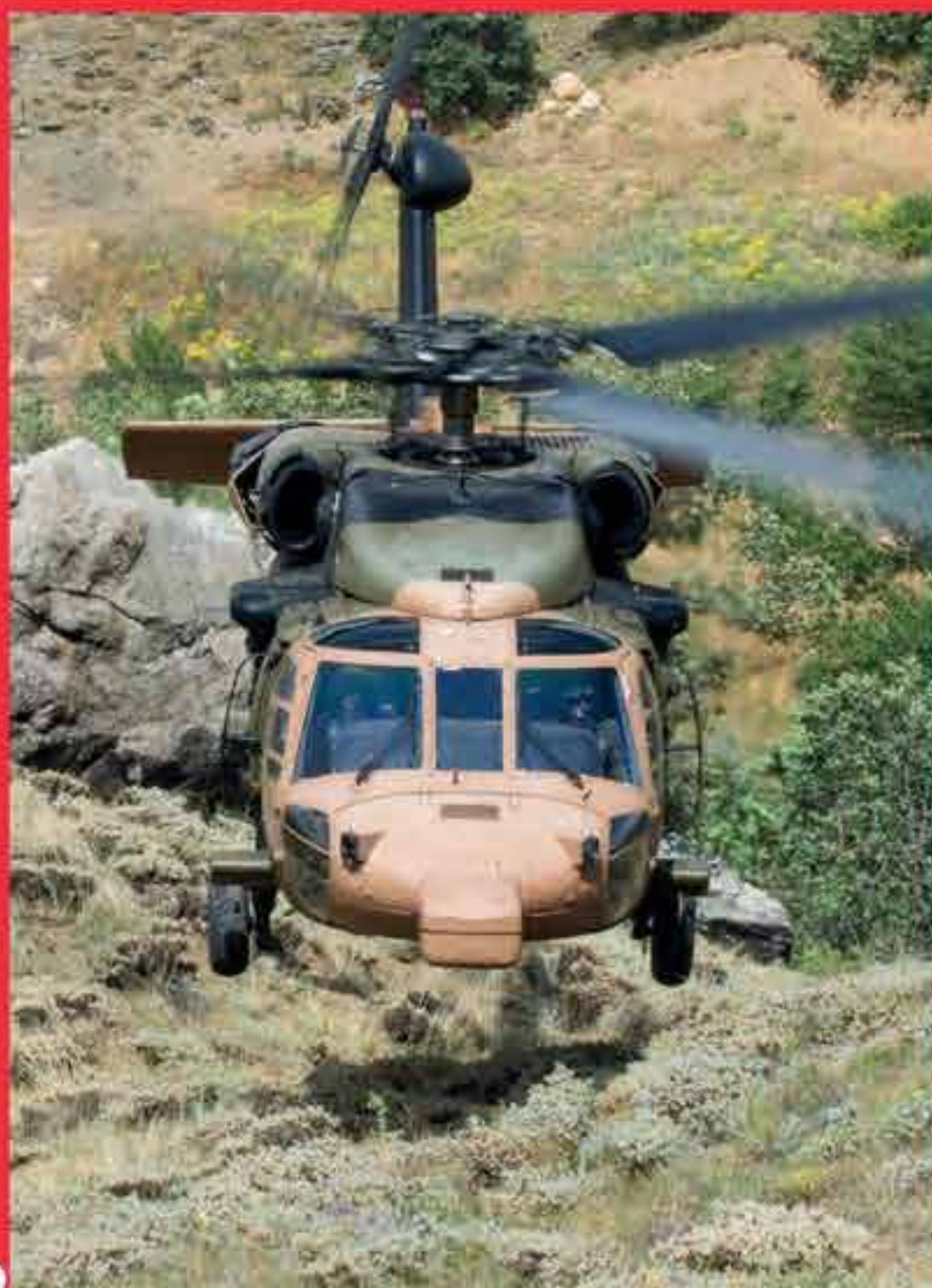
1 Askeri, an airport taken over by the Army from the Turkish Civil Aviation Authorities in 1998, with a huge adjacent training area. These will be used for specific instruction such as fixed-wing basic training, special operations, mountain training, NVG training and tactical flying.

Moving the School's assets to Isparta is a monumental task. All the flight instructors, mechanics and support personnel plus more than 50 fixed-wing aircraft and 100 helicopters need to be transferred.

The new base will initially accommodate around 450 students and other personnel but the figure could rise to as much as 1,200. Like Güvercinlik, it will be commanded by a brigadier general, indicating it will become an Army Aviation Regiment in its own right.

The 5th Maintenance Centre Command (5. ABMK), which conducts depot-level maintenance on all helicopter and fixed-wing types in the Army Aviation Command, will stay at Güvercinlik as regular maintenance will be performed at Isparta by local personnel. When depot-level attention is needed, aircraft will transfer back to Güvercinlik.

As a result of the coup-attempt, the Turkish government is pursuing a policy move to strategic air bases out of the direct vicinity of Ankara. There are strong indications that Akinci will only be used by Turkish Aerospace Industries and 141 Filo, the hosting unit of the Turkish Air Force for 'Solo Turk' has already moved to Konya. If this is permanent, remains to be seen, but plans to move all remaining army assets from Güvercinlik to Isparta are emerging. With the jandarma units moving from Güvercinlik to Aydın, this would leave the airfield empty but, it is rumoured



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that a VIP unit will remain behind, with some direct reporting units also taking residence there.

US Marine Corps inspired training

Inspired by the US Marine Corps (USMC), the Army Aviation School has adopted its doctrine to train all pilots on both fixed-wing and rotary aircraft. All students start with the fixed-wing course on the Cessna T182T Turbo Skylane and, having graduated, move on to the rotary section where they fly the AB206R and Huey.

Only when they successfully pass the solo flight in the AB206R do they learn to fly heavier helicopter types, typically the AB205 and UH-1H. Pilots are then selected for fixed-wing or rotary-wing.

Rotary-wing pilots move on to advanced helicopter training on the S-70A-28D Black Hawk and AS532AL Cougar while fixed-wing pilots transition to the Cessna T-42A, Ce421C and Beech 200.

Some rotary pilots with specific abilities get the chance to operate (Super) Cobra and T129 ATAK attack helicopters.

Modernisation

The Turkish Army has, in the past few years, been modernised and standardised. Under the Helimod I and Helimod II programmes, the Huey, Cougar and Black Hawk fleets have been upgraded and a number of older types replaced by newer aircraft.

The Cessna U-17B and Cessna T-41D fleet was replaced by CeT182T Skylanes, 46 of which were delivered between March 2009 and August 2010. Bell OH-58Bs were withdrawn from use, leaving only the Bell 206R in the basic helicopter training role.

'Due to the delay of the introduction of the T129 in the attack helicopter role, three additional AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters were delivered from USMC stocks in September 2012.'



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Advanced helicopter training is performed by the Army Aviation School on the S-70A-28D Black Hawk. The Black Hawk has proven invaluable to the Turkish Army in the utility and tactical transport roles. A number of local self-defence upgrades have been incorporated into the fleet, some of which have proved lifesavers on recent combat operations. Since 1996 the Army Aviation Command has received 30 Eurocopter AS532UL Cougars. They serve in the medium-transport role supporting local army ground units. Turkey remains the operator of the largest fleet of UH-1H/AB205 Huey helicopters in Europe.

Air Order of Battle Kara Havacilik Komutanlığı - Army Aviation Command

1nci Kara Havacilik Alay Komutanlığı - Ankara-Güvercinlik		1 Taarruz Helikopter Taburu/1 Filo Det	AH-1P
1nci Helikopter Taburu		Karagah ve Kh. Bölüğü	CeT182T
1nci Bölük	AS532UL, UH-1H, AB205	Arama ve Kurtarma Kolu	S-70A-28DSAR
2nci Bölük	UH-1H, AB205	4nci Kara Havacilik Alay Komutanlığı - Istanbul-Samandıra	
3ncü Bölük	CH-47F	1 Helikopter Taburu	
2nci Hücum Helikopter Taburu Komutanlığı		1nci Bölük	AS532AL
1nci 'Panter' Filo	S-70A-28D, UH-1H, AB205	2nci Bölük	UH-1H/AB205
1nci Taarruz Helikopter Taburu		Karagah ve Kh. Bölüğü	CeT182T
1nci Filo	AH-1P	Arama ve Kurtarma Kolu	S-70A-28DSAR
2nci Filo	AH-1P	Diyarbakir Helifield	
3ncü 'Kurt' Filo	AH-1W	7nci Kolordu Hava Taburu 'Bilge'	
Orta Genel Maksat Hücum Helikopter Taburu		1nci Bölük	AS532UL, S-70A-28D
4ncü Filo	S-70A-28D	Taarruz Helikopter Taburu	
Karagah ve Kh. Bölüğü	CeT182T	1nci Filo Det.	AH-1P/AH-1W
Arama ve Kurtarma Kolu	S-70A-28DSAR	Ankara Etimesgut	
Hava Ulaştırma Grup Komutanlığı	Beech B200, AB205 UH-1H, AS532UL	Özel Hava Grup Komutanlığı	S-70A-28D, CH-47F, CN235M
Kara Havacilik Okul Komutanlığı		Temelli (Ulucan Airfield)	
Kurslar Tabur Komutanlığı		FOB for Ankara Güvercinlik	
Sabit Kanat Uçuş Eğitim Kurulu	CeT182T, T-42A, Ce421B	Ilker Karter/Pinarbasi (Cyprus)	
Döner Kanat Uçuş Eğitim Kurulu	AB206R, UH-1H, AB205	Türk Baris Kuvvetleri Havacilik Birlik Komutanlığı	
Öğretim Baskanlığı	Ioan c/c from Academy	3ncü KHAK Det 'Baris Filo'	AS532UL, UH-1H, AB205
Simulatorle Uçuş Eğitim Komutanlığı	AS532AL, S-70A-28D & T129 Sim	Keşan, Edirne	
5nci Ana Bakim Merkezi Komutanlığı	Depot maintenance for fixed-wing and helicopters	1nci Kara Hava Grup Komutanlığı	
2nci Kara Havacilik Alay Komutanlığı - Malatya-Tulga		1nci Bölük	UH-1H, AB205
1nci Hücum Helikopter Taburu Komutanlığı		2nci Bölük	Bayraktar TB2 UAV
1nci Filo	S-70A-28D, AS532AL	Batman	
2nci Taarruz Helikopter Bölüğü 'Şimşek Filo'		14ncü İnsansız Uçak Sistemleri Üs Komutanlığı (TurAF facility)	
1nci 'Volkan' Filo	T129A	1nci Bölük	Bayraktar TB2 UAV
1nci 'Kobra' Filo	AH-1P	Elazığ	
İnsanlı Kesif Uçagi	Beech 350 (lease)	Vestel UAV unit	Karayel UAV
Karagah ve Kh. Bölüğü	CeT182T	Bodrum Askeri Özel Eğitim Merkezi	
Arama ve Kurtarma Kolu	S-70A-28DSAR	Eğitim ve Tatbikat Merkezi Komutanlığı	
<i>(GE: Beech, S-70, Huey, AH-1, no CeT182T, no Cougar)</i>		1nci Bölük	UH-1H, AB205, S-70A-28D
3ncü Kara Havacilik Alay Komutanlığı - Izmir-Gaziemir		Isparta/Süleyman Demirel	
1 Helikopter Taburu		The Kara Havacilik Okul Komutanlığı will move here from Güvercinlik in late 2016.	
1nci Bölük	AS532UL		
2nci Bölük	UH-1H, AB205		

Notes: Underlined is unconfirmed, x denotes unknown **Translations:** Ana Bakim Merkezi Komutanlığı (ABMK) = Main Maintenance Centre Command, Arama ve Kurtarma Kolu = Search and Rescue Flight, Döner Kanat Uçuş Eğitim Kurulu = Rotary-Wing Flight Training Course, Eğitim ve Tatbikat Merkezi Komutanlığı = Training and Exercise Centre Command, Hava Araçları Ana Depo ve Fabrika Komutanlığı = Main Aircraft Depot and Factory Command, Hücum Helikopter Taburu = Assault Helicopter Battalion, İnsanlı Kesif Uçagi (IKU) = Manned Reconnaissance Aircraft, İnsansız Hava Aracı (İHA) = Unmanned Air Vehicle (UAV), İnsansız Uçak Sistemleri Üs Komutanlığı = Unmanned Aircraft Systems Base Command, Kara Havacilik Okul Komutanlığı = Army Aviation School Command, Kara Havacilik Alay Komutanlığı = Army Aviation Regiment Command, Kara Havacilik Grup Komutanlığı = Army Aviation Group Command, Karagah ve Karagah Hizmet Bölüğü = Headquarters and Headquarters-Support Company, Karagah ve Karagah Bölüğü = Headquarters and Headquarters-Support Company, Kıbrıs Türk Baris Kuvvetleri Havacilik Birlik Komutanlığı = Cyprus Turkish Peace Corps Aviation Unit Kolordu Hava Taburu = Air Corps Battalion Kurslar Tabur Komutanlığı = Course Battalion Command, Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı = National Intelligence Agency, Orta Genel Maksat Hücum Helikopter Taburu = Medium General-Purpose Attack Helicopter Battalion, Öğretim Baskanlığı = Department of Education/Instructor Pilot School, Özel Eğitim Merkezi = Special Education Centre Özel, Hava Grup Komutanlığı = Special Air Group Command, Sinyal İstihbarat Başkanlığı = Signal Intelligence Directorate, Taarruz Helikopter Bölüğü = Assault Helicopter Company, Taarruz Helikopter Taburu = Assault Helicopter Battalion, Sabit Kanat Uçak Uçuş Eğitim Kurulu = Fixed-Wing Flight Training Course, Hava Ulaştırma Grup Komutanlığı = Air Transport Group Command, Simulatorle Uçuş Eğitim Komutanlığı = Simulators Flight Training Command. **Hierarchy:** Ordu = Army, Kolordu = Corps, Tumen = Division, Tugay = Brigade, Alay = Regiment, Tabur = Battalion, Bölük/Filo = Company/Squadron



Due to the delay of the introduction of the T129 in the attack helicopter role, three additional AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters were delivered from USMC stocks in September 2012. In June, this year, the first CH-47F Chinook heavy-lift helicopter arrived in Turkey, introducing a new capability for the Army.

Meanwhile organisational levels changes included the Özel Hava Grup Komutanlığı, or Army Special Forces Command, moving from Guvercinlik to Etimesgut, where it's now located next to the Turkish National Intelligence Agency (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı or MIT).

Under the Turkish Utility Helicopter Programme (TUHP) formalised in early June, the Army will receive 20 utility (UH)/ SAR-configured S-70i helicopters, designated T70, plus 11 for the Special Forces in the SAR/CSAR configuration. The first prototype of the T-70/S-70i for the Turkish Army built by Sikorsky's Polish subsidiary, PZL Mielec, made its first flight on June 22. Over the next two years, PZL will manufacture the first five cabin structures, which TAI will assemble to become the first five T-70s. The remaining helicopters will be produced under licence by TAI and Turkish defence company ASELSAN (Askeri Elektronik Sanayi, or Military Electronic Industries).

The TUHP contract covers the production and delivery of 300 T70s (109 firm orders and 191 options) to six Turkish military and government



Above: Turkish Defence Technology company HAVELSAN built a number of simulators for the Turkish Army. Flight Training Command at Guvercinlik operates several simulators: two for S-70A-28DSAR Black Hawks and one providing AS532UL Cougar instruction. A third, used in T129B ATAK training, is currently in the final phase of production. **Below:** In 2012, the Turkish Army received three ex-US Marine Corps AH-1W helicopters as attrition replacements. At least four were lost during service life on: May 18, 1997; February 23, 2003; February, 24 2008 and most recently on May 13 this year.



agencies. Thirty are for the Gendarmerie (Jandarma Genel Komutanlığı) in SAR/CSAR/Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH)/UH configuration while 20 UH/SAR T-70s will go to the Turkish Army Aviation Command (Türk Kara Havacılık Komutanlığı).

The General Directorate of Security (Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü) will receive 20 UH versions – to be flown by the National Police – and the Ministry of Forest and Water Management (Orman ve Su İşleri Bakanlığı) will take another 20 equipped for fire-fighting duties.

The Special Air Group Command (Özel Hava Grup Komutanlığı) will take on 11 and the Turkish Air Force (Türk Hava Kuvvetleri) will get six SAR/CSAR versions. A pair of T-70 ELINT/SIGINT versions will meanwhile go the Gölbaşı Command unit of the National Intelligence Agency/Signal Intelligence Directorate (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı/Sinyal İstihbarat Başkanlığı).

Unmanned capabilities

The Turkish Army adopted unmanned air vehicle (UAV) technology when it was still in early development. As far back as the early 1990s, it acquired six General Atomics GNAT 750 UAVs, which mainly operated in eastern Turkey against Kurdish separatists.

The GNAT 750 was supplemented by the more advanced and capable I-GNAT, of which 16 were delivered from 2000 onwards. They were retired in early 2000s and handed over to TAI.

Despite the success of the I-GNAT,

“The moving map system and the multifunctional displays help the pilots to navigate through congested areas.”

Fixed-Wing Aircraft

Beech 55 Baron / T-42A Cochise

Five T-42A Cochise aircraft, delivered under a US Foreign Military Sale (FMS) order in 1971, still serve at Guvercinlik as instrument trainers. They sport a white colour scheme similar to the Beech B200s and some have a shark mouth painted on the nose. Their primary role is to acquaint pilots destined for the Cessna 421B or Beech 200 acquainted with multi-engine aircraft. They are owned and operated by the Army Aviation School and, despite their age, are expected to remain in service until at least 2018.



Above: This Cessna T-42A was delivered on October 26, 1971 under a Foreign Military Sales programme as 71-21056. Despite its age it looks immaculate, which does credit to the maintainers of the Turkish Army Aviation Command. **Below:** The Golden Eagles now serve in the multi-engine training role, and were delivered to the Air Transport Group Command in 1975.

Beech B200 King Air / Beech 350 Super King Air

Five twin-engine Beech B200 King Airs delivered between 1991 and 1992 are used for VIP transportation and liaison duties. Two ex Army Harita Genel Komutanlığı (General Mapping Command) examples were transferred to the Milli Savunma Bakanlığı (Ministry of Defence) around 2011 after mapping activities were privatised. The King Airs' exact role remains unknown.

Five Beech 350 Super King Airs are leased under a \$70m contract, covering 2,000 flying hours, signed in May 2012. They still carry US civilian registrations and are in a quasi-civilian livery, but their purpose is very clear since they are registered under the FAA with 'US Special Operations Command' as the owner.

It's likely they are operated by the Army – by the unit called İnsanlı Kesif Uçagi (Manned Reconnaissance Aircraft) – from Malatya, but might also be flying



for the National Intelligence Organisation or MIT.

The King Airs are providing manned surveillance for border protection and the fight against terrorists in southeast Turkey. After the failed attempt, more than 30 troops fled from Marmaris to hide in the forests and mountains. A massive search by Commandos and special operations troops was

conducted in the region for more than a week. The aircraft provided support for these operations 24/7. Operating from Malatya, they flew approximately two hours to Marmaris, orbiting in the search area before returning to Malatya to be replaced by the next aircraft. Since 2012, all signal intelligence (SIGINT), electronic intelligence (ELINT) and communications



Above: The latest addition to the fixed-wing fleet of the Army Aviation School is the Cessna T182T Skylane. Featuring a digital cockpit and the Garmin 1000 system, it is well equipped for training pilots. **Below:** From 1991 onwards, the Turkish Armed Forces received seven Beech B200 twin-engine aircraft. Two are operated by Milli Savunma Bakanlığı (Ministry of Defence), four are operated by the Army while one crashed in 1992.



intelligence (COMINT) activities have been consolidated under the MIT department Sinyal İstihbarat Başkanlığı (Signal Intelligence Directorate), run by civilians. The consolidation of intelligence-gathering services under one rightly controlled entity such as the MIT, as well as the civilianisation of these services, will contribute to better control by the government.

Cessna 421B Golden Eagle

Three Cessna 421Bs delivered in 1975 were originally used for VIP and liaison duties but, after the delivery of the King Airs, started operating as advanced multi-engine training platform. The Army Aviation School now operates them as advanced multi-engine trainers and students graduating on the T-42A move on to the Golden Eagle before the Beech B200.

Cessna T182T Turbo Skylane

All Turkish Army regiments have a number of Turbo Skylanes in their inventory, serving both as trainers and in the liaison role. In total, the Army operates 45 (one has crashed) Cessna T182Ts; they were delivered between December 2009 and August 2010, after which the remaining U-17Bs and T-41Ds were withdrawn from use.

All feature a glass cockpit and have the Garmin 1000 glass flight deck system installed. They are also fitted with Mode-S transponders for ILS approaches. The Garmin equipment prepares students for the glass cockpit configurations they will encounter on other types operated by the Turkish Army.

During the initial course, the pilots total around 25 flying hours. After a final check ride, they fly up to 3 hours solo before moving on to the multi-engine T-42A.