



Trio of fighter types which have served with the Swedish Air Force, seen over base F-7, Satenas: top to bottom Lansen, Hunter and Tunnan.



# A Swedish Affair

Four days in mid-June 2010 were dedicated ones at Malmen air base, in Linköping, celebrating the centennial of Sweden's aviation industry - and its Air Force. This began with an aerospace industry conference, followed by one focused on European air power the next day, re-inauguration of the majorly refurbished and expanded Swedish Air Force Museum and finally, on Sunday 13 June 2010, an air event billed as "the biggest air show of the decade" with aircraft ranging from the Tummelisa to the Gripen fourth generation multi-role combat aircraft, attracting over 50,000 visitors.

Malmen is the birthplace of Swedish military aviation, where a military flight school was established in 1912. Malmen is today base for the Swedish Air Force's Helicopter Wing as well as housing the Air Combat Training School. Maj Gen Anders Silwer, Chief of the Swedish Air Force was a familiar figure at Malmen over the four days and inaugurated the event with

his key note address. This was followed by focus on the Swedish aeronautics industry by Åke Svensson, President and CEO of Saab AB, his successor, Håkan Buskhe also present at the occasion.

All eyes (and ears) were on the afternoon session which included a presentation on the Gripen Demo programme (of particular interest to Indians in the audience). An insight into



Bleriot monoplane.



Douglas DC-3 in SAS colours.

the use of bio-fuel to power the Gripen in the years to come was followed by an intriguing brief on Saab's UAS Programme before Micael Johansson, Head of Business Area Electronic Defence Systems talked about the unique Carabas which 'sees through' foliage and earth to detect hidden objects. Indian minds were racing at the possibility of using the Carabas both in the insurgency ridden east and infiltrated northern frontiers of the country.

The *European Air Power Conference* took place on 11 June, the introduction

by Maj Gen Anders Silwer followed by the venerable Air Vice Marshal Tony Mason's review of 'Operation Allied Forces, 1999'. The Swedish Minister of Defence, the youthful Sten Tolgfors gave 'a new direction for Swedish defence' and then, after lunch Robert Hewson presented his thesis on 'Trends and technology over the next 30 years'.

Maj Gen Jarmo Lindberg, Commander Finnish Air Force gave the view from Finland whose air arm flew at least two types which were common to the Indian Air Force in the 1960-70s (the Gnat and

MiG-21). Bill Sweetman, Editor in Chief of *Defence Technology International* articulated on the 'Future of European air power' which was followed by an electrifying talk on 'European security policy' by the inimitable Carl Bildt, Sweden's Minister of Foreign Affairs. The panel debate moderated by Dr. John Andreas Olsen of the Norwegian Defence University ended with closing remarks by the Swedish Air Chief.

The finale was on Sunday where under a bright Scandinavian sun, tens of thousands of enthusiasts gawked at an array of Swedish aircraft types, including the NATO-owned C-17 Globemaster III, with numerous 'owners' including Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, the United States, as well as two 'Partners for Peace' countries Finland and Sweden. The purchase is for two C-17s, plus a third which is the US contribution to the pool, which is operated in the same fashion as the NATO AWACS aircraft. The aircraft are jointly manned by crew from NATO countries and based at Papa Air Base in Hungary.

The flying display by Swedish piston-engined and jet fighters was capped by scintillating display by the Breitling Jet Team, a civilian aerobatic display team based in Dijon, France and operating seven Czech L-39 advanced jet trainers.



Tummelisa biplane.



Sk 16, otherwise known to the world as the Harvard/Texan.



The Saab J 29 Tunnan, affectionately known as the 'Flying Barrel'.



The future is here : Gripen NG Demonstrator.



Entrance of the refurbished Swedish Air Force Museum.

### The Swedish Air Force Museum

The Swedish Air Force Museum (in Swedish, *Flygvapenmuseum*) is located at Malmen, just outside of Linköping and was reopened after extensive refurbishment and expansion on 12 June 2010. This is the site where Baron Carl Cederström, nicknamed the 'Flyer Baron' received his aviator certificate in France in 1910 and founded his flying school in 1912. Along with the Swedish Army Museum (*Armémuseum*) in Stockholm, and the *Marinmuseum* at Karlskrona, it constitutes the government agency *Statens Försvarshistoriska Museer* ("Swedish Museums of the Defence Forces").

This is a venerable treasure trove of aircraft types which have served in Swedish colours during the 20th Century, from the decade after 1910 to the present Gripen. Noteworthy amongst these, from the World War I era includes an Albatros 120, as well as a Nieuport and Bréguet types combat aircraft. A Saab-built Junkers Ju 86 twin-engined bomber, plus a wide range of British, American, Italian and Swedish-origin aircraft showcase the diversity of aircraft types used by the Swedish Air Force during World War II. All service aircraft of significance from the post-war years are exhibited, from the Saab J 29 'Flying Barrel', a sturdy fighter of the 1950s, to the contemporary 4th generation multi-role fighter JAS 39 Gripen. Recently, a new exhibition has been added, based around the salvaged Swedish Air Force C-47 ELINT aircraft, shot down by a Soviet MiG-15 in 1952.



Gen Anders Silwer, Chief of the Swedish Air Force.

# Gripen



*'All the kings planes...' Saab's jet fighters in formation.*



*Saab's new CEO Håkan Buskhe on the left with his predecessor Åke Svensson.*



*Fourth generation fighter cockpit: Gripen on display.*



*The Flying Baron, and son, circa 1910.*



*Celebration time! Champagne and the Gripen prototype.*



*The distinctive Swedish Air Force roundel: golden crowns on blue.*