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AMERICAN AIRCRAFT IN URUGUAYAN COLORS

Tiny Uruguay, as one of the world's established democracies, and with a policy of military cooperation with the United States, has in recent years had its military aircraft delivered almost exclusively from the surplus stocks of the U. S. Air Force and U. S. Navy. Wartime situations beginning in 1939 combined with American post-war hemispheric defense policies such as the Rio Pact of 1947, have resulted in an Americanization of Uruguayan military aviation, no types of other than North American design having been acquired in the past 20 years. Before World War Two, however, Uruguay relied upon various European nations, especially France, for her military aviation requirements.

As early as March 17, 1913, an aviation school was inaugurated in Uruguay, with a Farman biplane and a Bleriot monoplane, both of French origin, comprising the training aircraft. Unfortunately, this school, headed by the French pilot Marcel Paillette, was not successful and the Uruguayan government was forced to send its flying personnel to Buenos Aires and to Santiago, Chile for instruction.

On November 20, 1916, a military aviation school was established in Uruguay, the Escuela Militar de Aviacion Uruguaya. Three months later, 5 Morane-Castaibet aircraft arrived in Montevideo for this school. These aircraft, again of French design, were constructed in Buenos Aires by Pablo Castaibet. The airplanes were variously engined, with 50, 70, 80, and 100 horsepower versions existing. A 50 horsepower Morane-Castaibet is today conserved in the National Aviation Museum of Uruguay, this airplane having flown at an air display as late as March 13, 1953. With a 50 horsepower Farman, also purchased in Buenos Aires, these aircraft were active until 1927-28.

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In the 1925 period, additional aircraft purchases were made, with roughly 5 Spads, 5 Breguet bombers, 20 Nieuport fighters, and 20 Avro Avian trainers being acquired in addition to a few Ansaldo Scouts from Italy. These types

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served with the Aeronautic Militar, as Uruguay's air force was then called, for a number of years. In 1933, a Farman F-190 ambulance aircraft was obtained, remaining in service until 1940. Also in 1933 arrived 15 Potez XXV A.2 reconnaissance bombers, two of which flew in Uruguay throughout World War II, finally being retired from service in 1945.

Equipment from the United States was acquired in 1935 in the form of 10 Waco D-7 two-seat general purpose biplanes. Some of these aircraft remained in service until the end of the war, as did two of 18 de Havilland Tiger Moth trainers also purchased at this time. A second United States type purchased in the late 1930 period was a lone Stinson Reliant. A de Havilland Dragon Rapide arrived in the country at about the same time as a military ambulance aircraft, and this airplane is apparently still serving in this capacity close to twenty-five years later.

As the Second World War broke out in Europe, Uruguayan military policy became oriented toward the United States. On June 22, 1940, negotiations were begun concerning the availability of bases in the country to United States forces in the event of emergency, Uruguay being the first Latin American republic to come to such an understanding.

With the spread of the war to the Western Hemisphere, Uruguay came to rely greatly upon the United States as a source of military aircraft supply, with a number of training aircraft allotted to the country during the war years. In 1942 arrived 4 North American AT-6 Texan and 7 Curtiss SNC-1 Falcon advanced training aircraft. In the next year followed 19 Fairchild PT-19 primary trainers plus one Beech 17. The PT-19s replaced the Tiger Moths and Potez XXVs that had been used in the training program, with only two of each being retained in service for specialized work. Through 1944 and until the end of 1945, the following training aircraft were delivered to the Uruguayan Air Force: 1 Beech AT-10, 8 Beech AT-11, 12 North American AT-6, and 3 Piper PA-12 Super Cruisers.

1946 saw the arrival of 50 Fairchild PT-26 trainers, while in 1947 two Douglas C-47 transports arrived in Uruguay. In 1948 came 40 additional AT-6 Texan trainers, 3 Ryan Navion liaison and communications aircraft, and 7 additional Beech AT-11 trainer-transport.

Combat elements of the Uruguayan Air Force were bolstered in 1950 with the acquisition of 12 North American B-25 Mitchell bombers and 15 North American F-51D Mustang fighters. Another two C-47 transport aircraft arrived in this same year. An excellent photo of one of the B-25s appears on page 69 of volume 2 of the JOURNAL.

Recent additions to the Fuerza Aerea Uruguaya, as the Uruguayan Air Force is now called, have been 10 de Havilland Chipmunk trainers in 1954, 3 Lockheed T-33 jet trainers in 1955, and 3 more T-6 Texan trainers as well

as 3 Lockheed F-80C jet fighters in 1956. No new equipment has been added in the last several years, though it is expected that current Fuerza Aerea Uruguaya aircraft will need to be replaced by more modern machines in a few years time.

Naval aviation in Uruguay was founded in February of 1925 with the name Servicio de Aeronautica de la Marina. In June of 1952 this name was changed to Escuela de Especializacion Aeronaval, the current title of Uruguay's small naval air arm.

Cant seaplanes from Italy made up the early equipment of this force. More recent aircraft are entirely of United States origin and include the following types: Fairchild PT-19, PT-23, and PT-26 trainers, North American SNJ, Grumman J4F-1 Gosling, Chance Vought OS2U-3 Kingfisher, Grumman F6F-5 Hellcat, General Motors (Grumman) TBM-1C Avenger, Martin PBM-5 Mariner, Bell 47 helicopter, and Piper PA-18 Super Cub. Of these types, all but the OS2U-3 and probably the PT-23 still serve Uruguayan military aviation.

The above description of Uruguayan military aviation has been pieced together from a number of sources, but especially from letters to the author by Nery Mendiburu, a resident of Uruguay. It is felt that the information related here is probably the most accurate and complete yet compiled on the subject of Uruguayan military aviation by any publication in English. Still, data concerning Latin American aviation is always sparse, and often inaccurate. Thus any comments, corrections, or additions from AAHS members would be very welcome.

Members are also advised to note other descriptions of Uruguayan military aviation which contain information not verified in the research involved in the preparation of this article. A pre-war Jane's lists Italian Ro. 37bis reconnaissance bombers as being in Uruguayan military use. William Green was helpful in the preparation of this article, and the fine reference book, THE AIR FORCES OF THE WORLD, compiled by Mr. Green and John Fricker, contains additional data, much of which must somehow fit into the total picture.

Below are several tables listing the aircraft currently believed to be in active Uruguayan military service, along with a compilation of United States types flown by the military services of the country.

Current Equipment: Fuerza Aerea Uruguaya

Fighters: Lockheed F-80C, North American F-51D

Bombers: North American B-25

Transports: Douglas C-47, Beech C-45

Training and Miscellaneous:

Lockheed T-33, North American AT-6, Fairchild PT-19,
Fairchild PT-26, Beech At-11, Piper PA-12, Ryan L-17B

Navion, de Havilland Chipmunk, de Havilland Dragon Rapide.

Current Equipment: Escuela de Especializacion Aeronaval

Fighters: Grumman F6F-5 Hellcat
 Bombers: General Motors TBM-1C Avenger
 Patrol: Martin PBM-5, Grumman J4F-1
 Trainers and Miscellaneous: Fairchild PT-19, Fairchild PT-26, North American SNJ, Bell 47, Piper PA-18

U. S. AIRCRAFT SUPPLIED TO URUGUAYAN MILITARY SERVICES

Type:	Approx. Yrs. in Serv.	F. A. U.	E. de E. A.
Beech 17	1943-?	1	--
Beech AT-10	1944-?	1	--
Beech AT-11/C-45	1944-59	15	--
Bell 47	? -59	--	2
Curtiss SNC-1	1942-?	7	--
Douglas C-47	1947-59	4	--
Fairchild PT-19	1943-59	19	?
Fairchild PT-23	?	--	?
Fairchild PT-26	1946-59	50	--
Gen. Motors TBM-1C	-59	--	?
Grumman F6F-5	-59	--	?
Grumman J4F-1	? -59	--	?
Lockheed T-33	1955-59	3	--
Lockheed F-80C	1956-59	3	--
Martin PBM-5	? -59	--	2
No. Amer. T-6/SNJ	1942-59	59	?
No. Amer. B-25	1950-59	12	--
No. Amer. F-51D	1950-59	15	--
Piper PA-12	1945-59	3	--
Piper PA-18	? -59	--	?
Ryan L-17B	1948-59	3	--
Stinson Reliant	193? -?	1	--
Waco D-7	1935-45	10	--



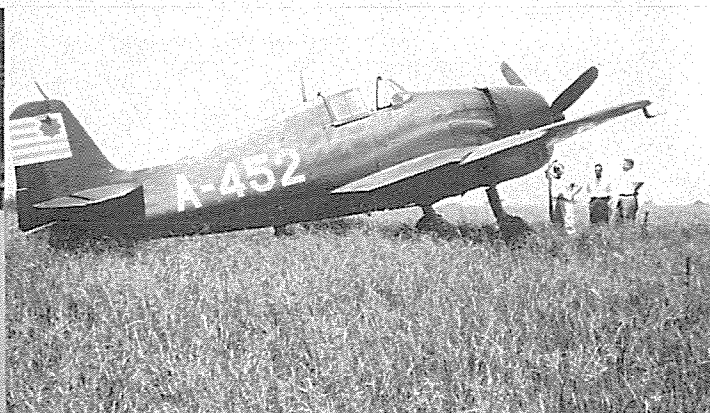
Curtiss-Wright 21



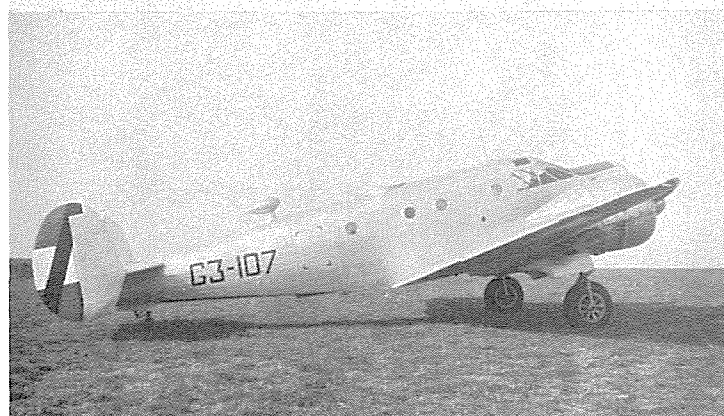
North American "Navion"



North American P-51D



Grumman F6F-1



Beechcraft AT-11



Douglas C-47



Beechcraft C-43



Stinson "Reliant"