

# Wonsan International Friendship Air Festival



During the historical event that took place at Wonsan-Kalma airport, Marshal Kim Jong Un provided three of its smartly camouflaged Mi-8Ts for parades and pleasure flights. During the event the 160 foreign guests were treated with a great flying display and the warm hospitality of the DPRK hosts. (Wonsan-Kalma, 21 September 2016, Jan Pielkema)

## Wonsan-Kalma Airport 20-21 September 2016

For the first time in its history an airshow was organized in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Starting with an initiative of the for North Korea tours well established British Tour operator Juche Travel Services, North Korean officials embraced the idea in order to promote the Wonsan area as an upcoming foreign tourist location. The result was a well organized air festival at the recently renovated Kalma airport, with a fluently exercised air display and a very interesting side program.

The foreign visitors and about 15,000-20,000 spectators each day had the opportunity to walk freely over the festival terrain, check the many vendor locations and drink whatever was presented. Of course this opportunity was only taken by the many spotters after the flying displays. During the displays the foreigners were allowed to walk almost freely to get the best shots with the sun from the right direction. A true example for many European airshows!

The first day of the festival consisted of two display periods of two hours during which the Air Koryo aircraft present made fly-pasts and/or touch and go's, alternated by the military aircraft that presented more vivid displays. The airshow consisted of a solo display of the MiG-29S, a Su-25K, Mi-8MTV-1 and an H500 and a formation display of four H500s, three Su-25Ks and two MiG-21s. The latter two were flown by the very famous Flowers in the Sky, being two 21 year old female pilots, one of which (Jo Kum-Hyang) made a widely publicized firm landing with aircraft 42 that proved in mint condition during close inspection in the static display next day.

The second day the festival continued with parachute jumps from the Mi-8Ts (including spotters doing tandem-jumps) and radio-controlled model-flying including a Thunderbirds F-16 (!) in the morning. The majority of the day was filled with pleasure flights by spotters with all available transport aircraft and helicopters, including the Air Force Mi-8Ts and An-2s! Again with optimal photo locations for the foreigners not flying.

In line with the habit of Korea of showing the polished side of the country, the majority of the civil and military aircraft recently had received a new coat of paint, many of which including a big red rectangle plaque to indicate the aircraft was inspected by Kim Yung-Un or even late Kim Yung-Il back in 1988 (Su-25K 49 on 17 August 1988).

Given the success of this years show it is very likely that the festival will be organized again in 2017.

Both Pyongyang Aero Club aircraft didn't carry any markings, other than the North Korean flag in the tail. The P-750 was still on the Chinese register being delivered earlier this year to Free Sky Aviation, although details are unknown. Some of the An-2s on show were among the 140 units delivered in the early 70's from the Polish production line. Given the serials it can be expected that the other two Antonovs were of Chinese origin, hence Y-5. One MiG-29S (type 9-13) proved extra interesting as it had been observed recently as MiG-29B version (Type 9-12).

621	An-2Y-5	KPAAF	f
622	An-2Y-5	KPAAF	spare
952/1G129-52	An-2T	KPAAF	f
28/10248	Su-25K	KPAAF	f
45/10245	Su-25K	KPAAF	f
49/10149	Su-25K	KPAAF	f/s
57/10257	Su-25K	KPAAF	f
42	Su-25K	KPAAF	spare
231	MD500E	KPAAF	spare
234	MD500E	KPAAF	f
240	MD500E	KPAAF	f
248	MD500E	KPAAF	spare
255	MD500E	KPAAF	
492/0092E	MD500E	KPAAF	f/s
42/75014205/1004	MiG-21bis	KPAAF	f/s
53/75014513	MiG-21bis	KPAAF	f
92	MiG-21bis	KPAAF	spare
550/25755/3601	MiG-29B	KPAAF	s
555	MiG-29S	KPAAF	f
303	Mi-8T	KPAAF	f
312	Mi-8T	KPAAF	f
911	Mi-8T	KPAAF	f
847/96022	Mi-8MTV-1	KPAAF	f
P-537	An-24B	Air Koryo	f
P-552	Tu-154B	Air Koryo	f
P-813	Tu-134B-3	Air Koryo	f
P-835	Il-18D	Air Koryo	f
P-885	Il-62M	Air Koryo	f
P-913	Il-76TD	Air Koryo	f
--	P-750 XStoll-III	Pyongyang Air Club	f
--	Alpi 400	Pyongyang Air Club	f

s: static

f: flying





No less than five Su-26s were present at Kalma for the Wonsan International Friendship Air Festival. This aircraft is wearing a red plaque indicating that the aircraft was inspected by President Kim Il Sung in 1988 and General Kim Jong Il in 2008. (20 September 2016, Piet van Bussel)



Two MiG-21bis were demonstrated by the first female KPAAF fighter pilots Rim Sol and Jo Kum-Hyang dubbed "The Flowers of the Sky". (Wonsan-Kalma, 20 September 2016, Jaap Walg)



The most modern fighter jet of the KPAAF is the MiG-29 Fulcrum. Of interest is this immaculate looking 'humpback' MiG-29SE, only a few of which are believed to be in service. (Wonsan-Kalma, 20 September 2016, Arnold ten Pas)





North Korea operates a large number of An-2s. With their low radar signature and STOL capabilities they are a useful asset of the KPAAF. (Wonsan-Kalma, 20 September 2016, Jaap Dijkstra)



One of the stars of the Air Koryo fleet is this splendid looking Il-62. The aircraft was manufactured in 1979. Air Koryo is a fine company that by no means deserves its one-star rating issued by Skytrax. (Wonsan-Kalma, 21 September 2016, Jan Pielkema)



In the 1980s the KPAAF purchased a large number of H500s through a third party. Despite the sanctions the North Koreans have managed to keep the type in service. Six were present at the Friendship Air Festival. (Wonsan-Kalma, 20 September 2016, Ad van Liempt)