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## **SOLOTURK, HALF MOON, BUT NOT HALF A JOB !**

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Mural Keles, Fatih Batmaz and Yalin Ahbab are heroes in Turkey, because they do something important in favor of the Turkish Nation. They put Turkey in the spotlight in the international world of aviation with their F-16 demo team and aerobatic show.

Next to several displays in Turkey they also attended air shows at Luxeuil France, Fairford Great Britain, Sanicole Belgium and at Leeuwarden in The Netherlands.

### **'HIGH PERFORMANCE AIRCRAFT'**

Of course Turkey knows it's tradition as it comes to demonstration teams and the Turkish Stars with their splendid demo's in their beautiful NF-5's are recognized all over the world. 'A solo demonstration with their high performance aircraft ' as they describe the F-16 solo display themselves, is quite something different in their opinion. The team is proudly presented therefore in an ambiance as you normally can find in Formula-1 teams in Grand Prix car racing.

On such a presentation during international 100 years Turkish Airforce celebration days at Izmir the press scrambled over each other to be able to ask their questions to these Turkish heroes. The pilots themselves showed modesty in this circus and accepted it all with a smile. They have worked hard to get this result and a bit of interest is reward to them.

### **GOOD CONTACTS WITH THE NETHERLANDS**

The project started about 1,5 year ago on the 4th Main Jet Base Command in Ankara, with the 100 years Turkish Air force celebration in 2011 in focus. The three pilots and support staff originate from the 141 Filo 'Wolf Squadron with their F-16C block 40, remaining completely standard, except for the smoke pods on the wingtips. The team was born with the name 'SOLO TURK'. They were welcomed to the Netherlands for a trip to increase their confident said Fatih Barmaz. The Air Force demonstration team visited Leeuwarden because the Dutch are experienced in this matter. Crews were talking about the experiences of the Dutch F-16 solo display team, the mentality of a demonstration pilot and aerobatic qualities of the F-16.

From that moment a training period of about three months followed in Turkey, which resulted in the first demonstration on April 15th 2011 in Ankara under the watchful eye of president Gül and the commanders of Turkish defense forces. The commander of the Turkish Air Force General Hasan Haksay spoke before the demo: Turkey should offer such a demo to express itself as leading but also celebrating country and one of the oldest air forces in the world. Now SOLOTURK will be - next to the Turkish Stars - the second pride of the nation. After this day many more demonstrations were held for the public, with an absolute highlight on the big international air show in Izmir which was held on June 4th and 5th. 2011.



## DESIGN WITH A SIGNIFICANCE

The design is as beautiful and practical. It all starts with a stripes-transition on the nose from grey to black with in between white stripes which results in a more or less zebra effect. The head of the eagle is painted in gold on the tail. The design came from Murat Dorkip and he was very meaningful with it. The head of the eagle symbolizes the Turkish Air force, but also the eagle stands for the drive and freedom of the soul of the pilots. On the bottom of the F-16 golden stripes and a crescent moon and star are visible which symbolize the state of Turkey. The alternating gray and black diagonal lines to the nose fit the characteristics of flying this plane as quick thinking and acting, continuous advances in quality and the recognition of 'no limits' Although the demo is somehow comparable to the F-16 demo program of the Royal Netherlands Air force, it still is always very impressive to watch. There is one striking difference; the Dutch pilot wears a recognizable military suit but the SOLOTURK team of twelve crewmembers are dressed in an exciting sleek black suit and we can tell, it really shows !

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Kees Otten & Wim Das

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