
SAAB SAFARI TESTS QUALITY OF STUDENTS

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In the upper north of Norway candidate pilots are assessed on their possible skills. On the base bardufoss you can find the Norwegian flightschool 'Luftforsvarets Flygeskole'. they fly here with the Saab Safari, a plane of which they are very satisfied ! Why ? One can fly it easily, it has very good flight characteristics but more important is that you can make a mistake without being punished immediately.

The little plane therefor has a most forgiving character.

SELECTION

Major Erling 'Grandpa' Flobak leads the process of selection of the cadets and is assisted by five instructors. About half of the group of 50 candidates will fall off the training, only the best of the best remain, while they are going to make choices later on to be fighterpilot, or helicopterpilot depending on their skills. There is special attention to a rapid development of practical skills, and the ability to assimilate a lot of theoretical knowledge. A pilot training is expensive and therefore the selection is strict. The training is modular and everything is described so one knows exactly what to expect and everyone has equal opportunities in principle. However, if it happens that a flight goes wrong twice by mistake, then you should be questioned and examined whether there may be an educational updated or that you already need to leave the training ! If this is not the case, then your 13th flight may be a solo-flight and with your 17th flight the procedure can be ended. In case you are selected you can be sent to Sheppard Air base in the United States where you will be able to learn the intricacies of flying, let's simply say that's where you really learn to fly.

FINE FLYING BEHAVIOR

The moment we were able to join a flight in the Saab Safir it's clear quite soon why the Norwegians are this enthousiastic about this plane. Thanks to the shoulder position of the wings a good view in all directions is possible because of the spherical canopy. The wings have a slight forward pointing position and the tail surfaces are high to be able to make short takeoffs. The plane is very stable in the air with a good climbing ability and is nice to handle in the turns. Actually there are few restrictions on the flight behavior. Instructor and student sit side by side and have good eye-contact and view on the instruments. The aircraft has dual controls and of course with the students there is flown only under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) conditions. A different situation is when pilots want to make their flight-hours on this type of plane, and they can also fly on the instruments. Even for aerobatics the small plane lends itself well where the limits are at +6 G and -3G. The fuel tanks have a flight duration of about 4 to 5 hours. Norway exploits 16 Saab Safirs since 1981, painted in an attractive yellow color, even one with shark teeth! Most planes have between 2000 and 3000 flight hours by now. Curious to mention is that the request for purchasing a second radio resulted in the decision that it is better to purchase a 'glass cockpit' because this was cheaper. This modification is carried out by starting next year.

MFI-15 EN 17

The plane was developed in neighboring Sweden, originally from Malmo Flygindustri as the MFI-15 and was named Safari. The first prototype flew in 1969. The military version was designated MFI-17 and received the name Supporter by the time the factory was taken-over

by Saab. About 250 were manufactured, most of them civilian and there were military orders from Zambia (20), Sierra Leone (2) and finally Denmark (32) that gave the plane the designation T-17. Except for Norway most by Saab built military aircraft are out of service already. Also, the plane was built under license in Pakistan after they had bought 28 aircraft and after that the exclusive rights for the production in own hand. The safari was locally known as the Mushshak, 92 were assembled and 120 were built under license in Pakistan for the Pakistan Airforce, and for the airforces of Iran (25), Oman (8) and Syria (6). Pakistan even developed a MFI-395 Super-Mushshak with a 260 pk turbo engine and airco in the cockpit. There are more possibilities than just training tasks. Reconnaissance, artillery observation and Forward Air Control can be successfully performed. It's an excellent COIN airplane (counterinsurgency) and it can be armed. You wouldn't believe it if you didn't see it, but under the wings six pylons can be mounted for six Bofor Bantam wire-guided anti-tank missiles or 2 pods with machine guns with a total weapon load up to 300 kg.

Due to a tight landing gear landing on soft terrain such as gravel and grass courts is possible and also skis can be mounted. Behind the two seats there is a small luggage compartment accessible through a small door with a window. Here may be included luggage to 88 kilo or a third seat can be mounted where the passenger looks backwards. In the seventies food drops were performed over Ethiopia with the Safari which - as a slow flying plane - was very suitable.

[Kees Otten & Wim Das](#)

SAAB SAFARI IN SHORT

Crew	1
Passengers	1 (+ 1 optional)
Length	7,00 m.
Span	8,85 m.
Height	2,60 m.
Wingsurface	11,90 square meter
Empty weight	646 kg.
Max. start weight	1200 kg.
Engine	1 Avco Lycoming 10-360-A1B6 of 200 Horsepower. with aircooling, fuelinjection and twobladed propellor
Minimum cruisespeed	92 km/hr
Cruisespeed	236 km/hr
Ceiling	4100 m.
Range	622 km.

