**Mexican Air Force**

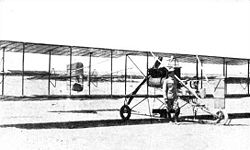
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| **Mexican Air Force *Fuerza Aérea Mexicana*** | |
| Mexican Air Force Symbol | |
| **Founded** | June 19, 1913 |
| **Country** | Mexico |
| **Allegiance** | [Mexican Secretary of Defense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SEDENA) |
| **Branch** | [Mexican Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Army) |
| **Type** | [Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force)/[Army Aviation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Army_Aviation) |
| **Size** | 11,770 personnel Aprox. 363 aircraft. |
| **Motto** | *Honor, valor & lealtad* "Honor, valor & loyalty" |
| **Colors** | Green, white & red |
| **Anniversaries** | February 10 |
| **Engagements** | [Mexican Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Revolution), World War II, [Chiapas Incident](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zapatista_Army_of_National_Liberation) |
| **Commanders** | |
| **Current commander** | Leonardo Gonzáles García |
| **Insignia** | |
| **Roundel** |  |
| **Aircraft flown** | |
| [**Attack**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_aircraft) | [PC-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-7), [PC-9M](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-9) |
| [**Electronic warfare**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic_warfare) | [Embraer R-99](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Embraer_R-99), [P-99](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Embraer_R-99) |
| [**Fighter**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fighter_aircraft) | [Northrop F-5 Freedom Fighter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northrop_F-5) |
| [**Interceptor**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interceptor_aircraft) | [Northrop F-5 Freedom Fighter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northrop_F-5) |
| [**Reconnaissance**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surveillance_aircraft) | [C-90A King Air](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beechcraft_King_Air), [Sabreliner 75A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_Sabreliner#Variants), [Fairchild C-26](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-26_Metroliner), [727-200](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_727), |
| [**Trainer**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trainer_(aircraft)) | [PC-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-7), [PC-9M](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-9) |
| [**Transport**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cargo_aircraft) | [DC-9](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DC-9), [Arava](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IAI_Arava), [An-32](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An-32), [727-200](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_727) |

The **Mexican Air Force** (*Fuerza Aérea Mexicana* or *FAM*) is the aviation branch of the [Mexican Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Army) and depends on the National Defense Secretariat ([SEDENA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SEDENA)). Since 2008, its commander is Gen. Leonardo Gonzáles García.

**History**

**Revolution**



The Curtiss aircraft *Sonora* was used for observation and bombing. Mexico, 1913.

The official predecessor of the Air Force was the *Army's Auxiliary Aerial Militia Squadron* (*Escuadrilla Aérea de la Milicia Auxiliar del Ejército*), created during the [Mexican Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Revolution) in April [1913](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1913_in_aviation) by the Secretary of War and Navy General Manuel Mondragón, who authorized pilots Miguel Lebrija and Juan Guillermo Villasana to bomb targets on Campo de Balbuena, in [Mexico City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico_City).

On February 5, 1915, the leader of the [Constitutionalist Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_Army), [Venustiano Carranza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venustiano_Carranza), founded the *Arma de Aviación Militar* (*Military Aviation Arm*), which would become the current air force. Its first commander was Lt. Alberto Salinas Carranza.

In 1925, due to the shortage of airplanes caused by World War I, Mexico set up the National Aviation Workshops ([TNCA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TNCA)) to design and build its own airplanes and aeroengines. When U.S. Colonel [Ralph O'Neill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_O%27Neill) was hired to revamp the Mexican Air Force in 1920, he reported to General [Plutarco Elías Calles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plutarco_El%C3%ADas_Calles) that most of the aircraft available had to be replaced since they were obsolete and worn away. Therefore, Mexico acquired some British [Avro 504K](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avro_504K) and [Avro 504](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avro_504)J airplanes, which later would be made in Mexico with the name *Avro Anáhuac.* In addition, in May 1920, Mexico acquired thirteen twin-engine bombers [Farman F.50](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farman_F.50).



Alfredo Lezama Alvarez, Unknown pilot, [Luis Farell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luis_Farell); on the far right is Eliseo Martín del Campo. Mid-late 1920s.



[Emilio Carranza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emilio_Carranza).

Between the years 1923 and 1929, Mexico found itself immersed in a wave of violent territorial, religious and military armed rebellions, which required the Air Force to quickly deploy its forces and provide air support wherever the federal army requested them. Some of these conflicts, that were decided mostly by the assertive use of the Air Force, are mentioned below.

On December 7, 1923, former President [Adolfo de la Huerta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolfo_de_la_Huerta) launched a military coup (delahuertista rebellion) against the government of President [Álvaro Obregón](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%81lvaro_Obreg%C3%B3n). The situation was extremely critical, because along with de la Huerta, about 60% of the army revolted, including various high-ranking generals across the country. The power tilted back in favor of the federal forces when the United States agreed to furnish the Mexican government with a fleet of new [de Havilland DH-4B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_Havilland_DH-4B" \o "De Havilland DH-4B) aircraft equipped with the Liberty motor, armed with [Lewis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis_Gun" \o "Lewis Gun) and [Vickers machine guns](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vickers_machine_gun" \o "Vickers machine gun) and able to carry bombs. The military coup was then suffocated by February 1924.

A territorial war was that of the [Sonora](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonora) [Yaqui](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yaqui) Indians who demanded by force that previous territorial treaties were implemented. The conflict lasted from 1926 to 1927, and it came to an end when a new treaty was implemented.

When President [Plutarco Elías Calles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plutarco_El%C3%ADas_Calles) pushed for the creation of the ‘Mexican Apostolic Catholic Church’, independent of Rome, it unleashed a widespread religious war known as the [Cristero War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cristero_War). This long civil war lasted from 1926 to 1929.

In May 1927, while General Obregón seemed keen to impose the presidency to General Calles, General Arnulfo R. Gómez launched a military coup against both Obregón and Calles. His command posts were located in the cities of [Puebla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puebla,_Puebla" \o "Puebla, Puebla) and [Veracruz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veracruz,_Veracruz" \o "Veracruz, Veracruz), where he led approximately 200 federal deserters, ammunition and weapons. The air force played a key role in their defeat.

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| [**Military of Mexico**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_of_Mexico) |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | **Components** |  | | **Mexican Air Force** |  | | [Mexican Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Army) |  | | [Mexican Navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Navy) |  | | **Ranks** |  | | [Air Force ranks and insignia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_Force_ranks_and_insignia_of_Mexico) |  | | [Army ranks and insignia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Army_ranks_and_insignia_of_Mexico) |  | | [Navy ranks and insignia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_ranks_and_insignia_of_Mexico) |  | | **History** |  | | [Military History of Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_History_of_Mexico) |  | | **Awards** |  | | [Military decorations of Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_decorations_of_Mexico) |  | |

Then, on March 3, 1929, a serious military coup took place, lead by General José Gonzalo Escobar and heeded by various other generals. In these days, the air force's remaining airplanes consisted of worn and shot [Bristol F.2 Fighter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol_F.2_Fighter), [Bristol Boarhound](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol_Boarhound), [de Havilland DH-4B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_Havilland_DH-4B) and [Douglas O-2C](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_O-2" \o "Douglas O-2), a force that was not suitable to defeat Escobar's power. In this context, the Mexican government convinced the U.S. government to promote the peace south of its border and quickly make available twelve new [OU-2M Corsair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O2U_Corsair" \o "O2U Corsair) with the 400 hp Wasp engine, nine [Douglas O-2M](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_O-2" \o "Douglas O-2), four *[Stearman C3](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stearman_C3)B* and six [Waco Taper Wings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waco_Aircraft_Company" \o "Waco Aircraft Company). Only two weeks after making the request, the U.S. government agreed, and several Mexican pilots travelled to [Brownsville, Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brownsville,_Texas), and [New York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York) to pick up the new aircraft. The key victory was decided in late March 1929 at the Battle of [Jiménez](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim%C3%A9nez,_Chihuahua" \o "Jiménez, Chihuahua), [Chihuahua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chihuahua_(state)), where after several days of air raids, Escobar was defeated by General Calles, taking about 6000 prisoners. This rebellion was quite serious, since a third of the officials and nearly 30,000 soldiers rebelled; in two months, more than 2000 men had been killed.

In May 1938, the Governor of [San Luis Potosí](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Luis_Potos%C3%AD), General Saturnino Cedillo, declared himself in rebellion and President [Lázaro Cárdenas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%C3%A1zaro_C%C3%A1rdenas) travelled there to personally mount the campaign against the revolt. The Air Force organized a mixed fleet of 17 aircraft that included some new [V-99M Corsair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V-99M_Corsair" \o "V-99M Corsair), engaging the enemy assertively when spotted. Cedillo quickly realized he had no chance in open fields against the air force and ran to the Huasteca Hills, where his men dispersed, abandoning him.

**World War II**



Mexican [P-47D Thunderbolt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_P-47_Thunderbolt" \o "Republic P-47 Thunderbolt) over the [Philippines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippines).

The [Escuadrón 201](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Escuadr%C3%B3n_201), a [P-47D fighter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_P-47" \o "Republic P-47) squadron of the *Fuerza Aérea Expedicionaria Mexicana* (Mexican Expeditionary Air Force), served in the Pacific against Japan during World War II. The 201 Squadron completed 59 combat missions over the [Philippines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippines) and Formosa, now called [Taiwan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan). It is the only unit of the Mexican armed forces ever to see overseas combat.

**Chiapas conflict**

On 1 January 1994, the day the [North American Free Trade Agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_Free_Trade_Agreement) (NAFTA) came into effect, hundreds of guerrillas from the previously unknown [Zapatista Army of National Liberation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zapatista_Army_of_National_Liberation) (EZLN) occupied several towns and cities in the southern state of [Chiapas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiapas).

The FAM was mobilized to support Army units, sending almost every available helicopter to the territory of operations. Units involved included the recently formed 214th and 215th Special Operations Squadrons, equipped with a mix of [Bell 212](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_212) assault- and [MD.530F](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MD_500_Defender" \o "MD 500 Defender) scout helicopters. Up to 40 helicopters were deployed to support an initial deployment of 10,000 ground troops.

[Bell 212s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_212) were armed in two configurations: for fire support with twin [MAG 7.62-mm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FN_MAG" \o "FN MAG) gun pods and cabin-mounted GPMGs; or as gunship, with [LAU-32 70-mm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mk_4/Mk_40_Folding-Fin_Aerial_Rocket" \o "Mk 4/Mk 40 Folding-Fin Aerial Rocket) rocket launchers, a twin [MAG gun-pod](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FN_MAG" \o "FN MAG) and cabin mounted MAG GPMGs.

[Pumas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A%C3%A9rospatiale_Puma), [Bell 205s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_204/205), [206s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_206) and [212s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_212" \o "Bell 212) from the 209th were also deployed, however, FAM's helicopter assets were scarce and the [Mexican Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Army) had to rely on almost every other government agency's helicopters for general support tasks. Almost any flyable aircraft from the National Attorney's Office ([PGR](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attorney_General_of_Mexico" \o "Attorney General of Mexico)) was also deployed, including Bell 206s and 212s, as well as the Navy's recently acquired [Mi-8MTV-1s](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-17" \o "Mil Mi-17). Eventually the Army deployed some 70,000 ground troops and air support proved to be insufficient; hence the decision was taken to considerably expand the FAM's helicopter fleet.

By December 1994, FAM had bought additional 12 armed MD.530MG 'Defender' and four [UH-60L Blackhawk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UH-60_Black_Hawk) helicopters, which it grouped into the 216th Special Operations Squadron. This unit was the spearhead of operation "Arco Iris" (Rainbow) to re-take several towns that had fallen under rebel control in January 1994. The new militarized Defenders came armed with M2AC machine-guns and [LAU-68A 70-mm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mk_4/Mk_40_Folding-Fin_Aerial_Rocket" \o "Mk 4/Mk 40 Folding-Fin Aerial Rocket) rocket launchers. Three additional units were ordered in 1996 and delivered as attrition replacements in March 1998. Black Hawks wore 1191 to 1194 serials and are being used for special operations.

Although the FAM received 18 surplus Bell 206s from the [Attorney General's office](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attorney_General_of_Mexico" \o "Attorney General of Mexico) (PGR) in the mid-1990s, the main need identified by the FAM High Command was for a new fleet of transport helicopters that would allow it to support the Army with an adequate airlift capability.

**Structure**

A national commander under the orders of the Secretary of National Defense is in charge of the Mexican Air Force. The second-in-command is the Air Force Chief of Staff, who supervises a Deputy Chief of Operations and a Deputy Chief of Management. The Air Force divides the country's territory into four regions: Northwestern ([Mexicali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexicali), [Baja California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baja_California)), Northeastern ([Chihuahua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chihuahua,_Chihuahua" \o "Chihuahua, Chihuahua), [Chihuahua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chihuahua_(state))), Central ([Mexico City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico_City)) and Southeastern ([Tuxtla Gutiérrez](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuxtla_Guti%C3%A9rrez), [Chiapas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiapas)); each region is commanded by a general. The regional headquarters are in charge of 18 air bases across the country:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | [Santa Lucía](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Santa_Luc%C3%ADa,_Hidalgo&action=edit&redlink=1), [Estado de Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estado_de_Mexico) | 10 | [Culiacán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culiac%C3%A1n), [Sinaloa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinaloa) |
| 2 | [Ixtepec, Oaxaca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ixtepec,_Oaxaca) | 11 | [Santa Gertrudis](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Santa_Gertrudis,_Chihuahua&action=edit&redlink=1), [Chihuahua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chihuahua_(state)) |
| 3 | [El Ciprés](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=El_Cipr%C3%A9s&action=edit&redlink=1), [Baja California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baja_California) | 12 | [Tijuana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tijuana), [Baja California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baja_California) |
| 4 | [Cozumel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cozumel), [Quintana Roo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quintana_Roo) | 13 | [Chihuahua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chihuahua,_Chihuahua), [Chihuahua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chihuahua_(state)) |
| 5 | [Zapopan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zapopan), [Jalisco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jalisco) | 14 | [Escobedo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Escobedo), [Nuevo León](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuevo_Le%C3%B3n) |
| 6 | [Tuxtla Gutiérrez](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuxtla_Guti%C3%A9rrez), [Chiapas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiapas) | 15 | [San Juan Bautista la Raya](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=San_Juan_Bautista_la_Raya&action=edit&redlink=1), [Oaxaca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oaxaca) |
| 7 | [Pie de la Cuesta, Guerrero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pie_de_la_Cuesta,_Guerrero) | 16 | [Ciudad Pemex](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ciudad_Pemex&action=edit&redlink=1), [Tabasco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabasco) |
| 8 | [Mérida, Yucatán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A9rida,_Yucat%C3%A1n) | 17 | [Copalar](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Copalar&action=edit&redlink=1), [Chiapas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiapas) |
| 9 | [La Paz, Baja California Sur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Paz,_Baja_California_Sur) | 18 | [Hermosillo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermosillo), [Sonora](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonora) |

**Units**

1st Military Air Station - [Mexico City International Airport](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico_City_International_Airport)

* [General Coordination of the Presidential Air Transport Unit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Coordination_of_the_Presidential_Air_Transport_Unit) (CGTAP)
* High Command Special Air Transport Unit (UETAAM) - operating [UH-60 Black Hawk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UH-60_Black_Hawk" \o "UH-60 Black Hawk), [SA 330J](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A%C3%A9rospatiale_Puma), [JetStar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_JetStar), [IAI 201](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IAI_Arava), [Beechcraft Super King Air](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beechcraft_Super_King_Air), [Boeing 737](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_737)

1st Military Air Base - Santa Lucia, [Hidalgo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hidalgo)

* 1st Air Group
  + 101 Air Squadron - operating [Bell 412](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_412), [UH-60](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UH-60_Black_Hawk), [SA 330](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A%C3%A9rospatiale_Puma)
  + 112 Air Squadron - operating [Bell 212](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_212), [MD 530MG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MD_500_Defender)
  + 401 Air Squadron - operating [Northrop F-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northrop_F-5)
* 3rd Air Group
  + 301 Air Squadron - operating [An-32](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonov_An-32" \o "Antonov An-32), [IAI 101B/102/201](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IAI_Arava), [C-295](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-295) (Two C-295 are in active service.)
  + 302 Air Squadron - operating [C-130 Hercules](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-130_Hercules" \o "C-130 Hercules), [L100-30](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_L-100_Hercules), [Boeing 727](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_727)
  + 303 Air Squadron - operating [Mi-8T/MTV-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-17" \o "Mil Mi-17)
  + 502 Air Squadron - operating [Beech 90](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beechcraft_King_Air" \o "Beechcraft King Air), [Cessna 402](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_402), [Cessna 182](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_182), [Cessna 500](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_500), [Cessna 206](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_206), [Cessna 210](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_210), [RC690/695](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aero_Commander_500)
  + Aerial Surveillance Squadron - operating [C-26 Metroliner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-26_Metroliner" \o "C-26 Metroliner), [SA2-37B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schweizer_SGM_2-37), [R/P-99](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Embraer_R-99)

2nd Military Air Base - [Ixtepec, Oaxaca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ixtepec,_Oaxaca)

* 1st Air Group
  + 402 Air Squadron - operating [T-33](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T-33_Shooting_Star" \o "T-33 Shooting Star)(recently retired)

[3rd Military Air Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ensenada_Airport) - [El Cipres](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=El_Cipres&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "El Cipres (page does not exist)), [Baja California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baja_California)

* 5th Air Group
  + 106 Air Squadron - [Cessna 182](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_182)

4th Military Air Base - [Cozumel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cozumel), [Quintana Roo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quintana_Roo)

* 2nd Air Group
  + 201 Air Squadron - [Pilatus PC-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-7)

5th Military Air Base - [Zapopan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zapopan" \o "Zapopan), [Jalisco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jalisco)

* 5th Air Group
  + 105 Air Squadron - operating [Cessna 182](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_182), [Cessna 206](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_206)
  + 111 Air Squadron - operating [Bell 206](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_206), [Bell 212](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_212)
* Air College
  + Preparatory Squadron - operating [Beech F33C](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beechcraft_Bonanza" \o "Beechcraft Bonanza)
  + Primary Squadron - operating [Aermacchi SF.260](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aermacchi_SF.260)
  + Advanced Squadron - [Pilatus PC-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-7)

[6th Military Air Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco_Sarabia_National_Airport) - Teran, Chiapas

* 2nd Air Group
  + 202 Air Squadron - operating [Pilatus PC-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-7), [Pilatus PC-9M](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-9)

7th Military Air Base - Pie de la Cuesta, [Guerrero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guerrero)

* 5th Air Group
  + 102 Air Squadron - operating [Bell 206](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_206), [Bell 212](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_212)
* 2nd Air Group
  + 204 Air Squadron - operating [Pilatus PC-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-7)

8th Military Air Base - [Mérida, Yucatán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A9rida,_Yucat%C3%A1n)

* 5th Air Group
  + 104 Air Squadron - operating [Bell 206](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_206), [Bell 212](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_212), [CH-53D Yas'ur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CH-53), [Cessna 210](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_210)

9th Military Air Base - [La Paz, Baja California Sur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Paz,_Baja_California_Sur)

* 2nd Air Group
  + 203 Air Squadron - [Pilatus PC-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-7)

10th Military Air Base - [Culiacán](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culiac%C3%A1n), [Sinaloa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinaloa)

* 5th Air Group
  + 109 Air Squadron - [Cessna 182](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_182)

11th Military Air Base - Santa Gertrudis, [Chihuahua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chihuahua_(state)" \o "Chihuahua (state))

* Military School of Applied Airtactics of the Air Force (EMAATFA) - operating [Pilatus PC-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-7)

13th Military Air Base - [Chihuahua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chihuahua,_Chihuahua" \o "Chihuahua, Chihuahua), [Chihuahua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chihuahua_(state))

* 5th Air Group
  + 110 Air Squadron - operating [Cessna 182](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_182)

14th Military Air Base - [Monterrey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monterrey), [Nuevo Leon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuevo_Leon)

* 5th Air Group
  + 108 Air Squadron - operating [Cessna 182](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_182)

15th Military Air Base - [Oaxaca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oaxaca), [Oaxaca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oaxaca)

* 5th Air Group
  + 103 Air Squadron - operating [Bell 212](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_212)

[18th Military Air Base](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Ignacio_Pesqueira_Garcia_International_Airport) - [Hermosillo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermosillo), [Sonora](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonora)

* 5th Air Group
  + 107 Air Squadron - operating [Cessna 182](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_182), [Pilatus PC-6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-6)

**Ranks**

Air Force ranks are the same as in Mexico's Army, with the exception of [generals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General" \o "General).

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Rank** | **Insignia** | | *General de División* - [Divisional General](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divisional_General) |  | | *General de Ala* - Wing General |  | | *General de Grupo* - Group General |  | | *Coronel* - [Colonel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonel) |  | | *Teniente Coronel* - [Lieutenant Colonel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieutenant_Colonel) |  | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Rank** | **Insignia** | | *Mayor* - [Major](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major) |  | | *Capitán Primero* - First [Captain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_(land_and_air)) |  | | *Capitán Segundo* - Second [Captain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_(land_and_air)) |  | | *Teniente* - [Lieutenant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieutenant) |  | | *Subteniente* - [Sub-lieutenant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sub-lieutenant) |  | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Rank** | **Insignia** | | *Sargento Primero* - First Sergeant |  | | *Sargento Segundo* - Second Sergeant |  | | *Cabo* - Corporal |  | | *Soldado de Primera* - Soldier First Class |  | | *Soldado* - Soldier |  | |

**Pilot selection and training**

The FAM offers higher education, middle education, technical training, tactical training and specialized technical training in its various campuses:

**College of the Air**



Main facade of the Air Force Academy

Since the National School of Aviation was opened in 1915, it took different names over the years until finally, in 1959 it joined the military school of meteorology, mechanics and aviation specialists, forming the leading campus in military aviation education: 'El Colegio del Aire' (College of the Air), which since September 9, 1959, has guided the formation of Air Force officers. The Air Force Academy is an all academic institution of the Mexican Air Force and comprises four schools: 'Military Aviation School', 'Maintenance and Supply Military School', 'Air Force Military Specialist School', and the 'Military Troops' Air Force Speciaslist School'.

Military Aviation School (*EMA*)

Admission to the Air Force is through the mechanism of military recruitment that takes place every year at The Ministry of Defense. The FAM currently offers tertiary level studies - highlighting that of Military Pilot, which spans 4 years at the facilities of the 'College of the Air' located on the Military Air Base No. 5.

The subjects taught in pilot training include: tactics of the branches of aviation, general aviation tactics, [meteorology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meteorology), [air navigation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_navigation), [air traffic control](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_traffic_control), [radio communications](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radio_communications) and culture in general, along with approximately 250 hours of flight. During the first year, the training is theoretical. During the second year, [Beechcraft Bonanza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beechcraft_Bonanza) aircraft are used for flight instruction. During the third the cadets are trained Aermacchi SF260EU for aerobatics, and later on [Pilatus PC-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-7) for advanced flight tactics, including combat. Within each of these stages, the cadets are trained in [aerial acrobatics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aerobatics), stage tactical instrument flight, visual flying rules (VFR), radio operations, among others, which increase in complexity as the cadets' training progresses. The first female aviator to graduate as a pilot in the history of FAM, Andrea Cruz, became a cadet at the Military Aviation School in 2007.

Military Air Force Specialist School (*EMEFA*);

Military School of Air Force Specialist offers a comprehensive scholarship lasting three years for officer training meteorologists and flight control, obtaining at the graduate level of lieutenant. His duties are to provide meteorological information and control of military or civil aircraft.

School of the Air Force Special Forces(*EMTEFA*)

Military School of special troops of the Air Force is a establishment of military education that has as its mission to train sergeants in seconds aviation maintenance, supply lines, electronic aviation and military aviation. The school is located in the St. Lucía military base.

Military School of Maintenance and Supply (*EMMA*)

In this school, officers are trained as aviation maintenance specialists, [aviation electronics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avionics) specialists, weapons and air supply lines.

**Recruitment**

To enter any of the campuses of the Air Force, [SEDENA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SEDENA) convenes a competitive entrance examination which is held each year. The requirements are:

* Mexican citizenship and have no other nationality
* Be the son of Mexican born parents
* Minimum age of 15 years old at December 31 of the year in course
* Maximum age of 20 years old at December 31 of the year in course
* Have completed high school or equivalent
* Minimum height of 1.65 m

In order to be admitted to any school of the Mexican Air Force Academy mentioned above, the applicant should also perform the following tests: physical, medical, cultural, and aviation psychology. In some cases, the examination and psychological Aeromedical 2nd level may also be required.

**Fleet**

See also: [Mexican Navy aircraft fleet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Navy#Aircraft)



A Mexican Air Force [F-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northrop_F-5)

Mexico has the second largest defense budget in Latin America, spending about 0.5% GDP on its military. Because of the ongoing [Mexican Drug War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Drug_War), increasing importance has been placed on acquiring airborne surveillance platforms, light aircraft, helicopters and rapid troop transport.

For national security reasons, the Air Force does not disclose the exact type or amount of aircraft in their fleet, but it is estimated at 241 airplanes and 117 helicopters:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Class** | **Aircraft** | **Model** | **In service** | **Origin** | **Image** |
| Combat & interception jets | [Northrop F-5 Freedom Fighter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northrop_F-5) | F-5E F-5F | 8 2 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| Close support airplanes | [Pilatus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_Aircraft) | [PC-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-7) [PC-9M](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-9) | 60 2 | [Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland) |  |
| Transport airplanes | [C-130](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_C-130_Hercules) | A/E/MK1/MK3/L382G Hercules | 12 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| [EADS CASA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EADS_CASA) | [C-295](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-295) | 4 | [Spain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spain) |  |
| [Boeing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing) | [727-200](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_727) | 3 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| [Arava](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IAI_Arava) | IAI-201 | 12 | [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) |  |
| [McDonnell Douglas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McDonnell_Douglas) | [DC-9](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DC-9) | 1 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| Reconnaissance airplanes | [Beechcraft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beechcraft) | [C-90A King Air](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beechcraft_King_Air) | 4 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| [Rockwell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rockwell_International) | [Sabreliner 75A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_Sabreliner#Variants) | 5 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| [Embraer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Embraer) | R-99 P-99 | 1 2 | [Brazil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazil) |  |
| [Fairchild C-26](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-26_Metroliner) | Metroliner III | 4 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| [Schweizer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schweizer) | SA2-37A | 1 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| [Cessna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna) | [182 Skylane](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_182) | 70 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| [Maule Air](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maule_Air) | M-7-235 MXT-7-180 | 6 21 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| [Pilatus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_Aircraft) | [PC-6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilatus_PC-6) | 4 | [Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland) |  |
| Training airplanes | [Aermacchi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aermacchi) | [SF-260](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SF-260) | 27 | [Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy) |  |
| [Beechcraft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beechcraft) | [F-33C Bonanza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beechcraft_Bonanza) | 29 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| Combat helicopters | [Sikorsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikorsky_Aircraft) | [UH-60 Black Hawk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UH-60_Black_Hawk) | 6 |  |
| [MD Helicopters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MD_Helicopters) | [530F](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MD_Helicopters_MD_500#530F) | 20 |  |
| Transport helicopters | [Mil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Moscow_Helicopter_Plant) | [Mil Mi-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-2) [Mil Mi-8](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-8) [Mil Mi-17](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-17) | 4 8 19 | [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) |  |
| [Sikorsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikorsky_Aircraft_Corporation) | [CH-53D Yas'ur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CH-53_Sea_Stallion) | 4 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States)  [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) |  |
| [Bell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_Helicopter_Textron) | [412](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_412) [412EP](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_412#Specifications_.28412EP.29) | 4 7 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| Training helicopters | [205](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_204/205) [206B](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_206) | 1 2 |  |
| Reconnaissance helicopters | [205](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_204/205) [206](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_206) | 1 4 |  |
| VIP airplanes | [Boeing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing) | [757-225](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_757) [737-300](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_737) | 1 2 |  |
| [Cessna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna) | [Citation 500](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cessna_Citation) | 1 |  |
| [Lockheed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_Corporation) | [Jetstar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_JetStar) | 1 |  |
| [Grumman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grumman_Aircraft_Engineering_Corporation) | [G-2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grumman_Aircraft_Engineering_Corporation) | 1 |  |
| [Learjet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learjet) | [35A](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learjet_35) | 1 |  |
| [Aero Commander](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aero_Commander) | 69-5A Turbo | 1 |  |
| VIP helicopters | [Eurocopter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurocopter) | [Puma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A%C3%A9rospatiale_Puma) [Super Puma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurocopter_Super_Puma) | 2 5 | [European Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union) |  |
| Aircraft recently retired | [Lockheed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_Corporation) | [T-33 Shooting Star](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_T-33_Shooting_Star) | 15 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |
| [Mil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Moscow_Helicopter_Plant) | [Mil Mi-26](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mil_Mi-26) | 1 | [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) |  |
| Retired and still functional | [Stearman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stearman_Aircraft) | [PT-17 Kaydet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing-Stearman_Model_75) | 3 | [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |  |

**Future acquisitions**

In March 2009, [Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico) placed an order with [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France) to purchase six [EC 725 Super Cougar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurocopter_EC_725) helicopters at a cost of €168 million euros (around $212 million USD). Deliveries are expected at the end of 2011.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Class** | **Aircraft** | **Model** | **On order** | **Origin** | **Image** |
| Transport helicopters | [Eurocopter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurocopter) | [EC-725 Cougar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurocopter_EC_725) | 12 in order | [European Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union) |  |
| Transport Aircraft | [Bombardier Aerospace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombardier_Aerospace) | [Bombardier Global Express](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombardier_Global_Express) | 1 | [Canada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada) |  |

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