



ITALIAN TRIO

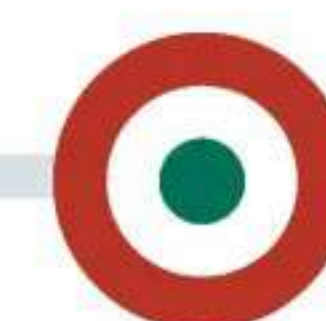
A unique formation team featuring classic Fiat G.46 trainers has been formed in Italy. **Simone Bovi** and **Gabriele Orlandi** tell its story

RIGHT: A magnificent view of the G.46 team on its way to Fairford last year. Aviation Photo Crew

Comprising three distinctive Fiat G.46 military trainers, the Italian G.46 Team made its UK debut at 2023’s Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) last July. The eye-catching type was developed in the 1940s, the

prototype flying for the first time on June 25, 1947. The Italian Air Force operated them until 1960, but in more recent times, following a plan instigated by G.46 I-AEKA owners Silvia Sorlini and Giovanni Marchi, a three-aircraft formation team has been established. The team is completed by Mario Cotti’s G.46

I-AEKT and Claudio Coltri’s I-GIGE. The aircraft owned by Silvia and Giovanni is also part of the Museo Volante (Flying Museum) private collection in Ceresara, Mantova. “The idea was in mind a few years ago as we tried to create a flying formation with a different aircraft model, but without



LEFT: Standing from left: Silvia Sorlini, Giovanni Marchi, Mario Cotti, Francesco Dante, Claudio Coltri and Andrea Colombini. Front: Massimiliano Coser and Giulia Marchi Sorlini Gabriele Orlandi

The Italian G.46 Team

Aircraft	Year built	Pilots
G.46 3B I-GIGE	1950	Francesco Dante, Claudio Coltri (owner),Andrea Colombini
G.46 4B I-AEKA	1951	Giovanni Marchi, Silvia Sorlini
G.46 4A I-AEKT	1952	Mario Cotti (owner), Ivan De Boni, Massimiliano Coser

during the late 1940s to promote the armed forces.”

Going public

Before displaying to the public, the G.46 pilots did of course undergo a strict period of training during which they were assisted by military pilots with aerobatic flying experience. After gaining the necessary skills and confidence to fly effectively in formation, the team began to appear at airshows in Italy, such as that at Pratica di Mare Air Base near Rome, which was staged to mark last year’s centenary of the Italian Air Force.

The opportunity to attend RIAT was a prospect too good to miss. They completed their journey to Fairford, in Gloucestershire, in three legs, during which the air-to-air photographs on these pages were captured. One of the

RIGHT: The Fiat three-ship flying over a patchwork of fields Aviation Photo Crew



RIGHT: In close formation – I-GIGE (nearest camera), with I-AEKA and I-AEKT Aviation Photo Crew

success,” said Silvia, reflecting on the team’s origins. “We did not give up and with passion we started to work on something which we could bind to our Italian heritage. This [the G.46] is an aircraft which on the one hand was used to train hundreds of military pilots but was also used by the Pattuglia della Giovinezza (Youth Flying Team), a military formation created



RIGHT: The three aircraft pictured in Italy last May Gabriele Orlandi





Type history

Developed shortly after World War Two, the type was adopted by the Italian Air Force for training purposes. Built in five series of single-seat A models, the Fiat was initially equipped with the Alfa Romeo 115b engine, replaced on the second series by the de Havilland Gipsy Queen 30. Largely built of light alloy, the G.46 featured taildragger retractable landing gear, an elliptical fuselage and a cantilevered monoplane wing. Between 1948 and 1950, around 70 aircraft were commissioned by Argentina, Syria, and Austrian air forces with another 50 used by Italian flying schools for basic training. Due to the high cost of maintenance, the G.46s were swiftly replaced by more sustainable aircraft. At the time of writing, the three aircraft flown by the Italian G.46 Team are the only airworthy examples of the 'breed'.

“Attending RIAT meant that enthusiasts from all over the world got to know us and see the work we have done so far”

pilots, Francesco Dante, recalled: “We wanted to get the best from these well-preserved aircraft, and last year we finally managed to participate in some remarkable airshows in Italy and abroad. We were invited to attend RIAT and after three stops we finally reached our destination where we parked our aircraft for the static display. This meant that enthusiasts from all over the

world got to know us and see the work we have done so far.”

The team continues to be financed by nothing more than its own personal resources and of course the passion of the aircraft owners. It's a triumphant example of what can be achieved when there's determination and desire. Instagram users can follow the team's activities on its official page: [pattuglia_g46](#) ●



TOP: Low over The Channel – a memorable sight from the cockpit of G.46 I-AEKA
Silvia Sorlini

ABOVE: An evocative morning view of the team preparing for action on July 18, 2023
Silvia Sorlini

LEFT: “With passion we started to work on something which we could bind to our Italian heritage”
– Silvia Sorlini
Gabriele Orlandi