

# The Army Aviation Corps

The Army Aviation Corps (AAC) provides aerial assistance to the ground units of the Indian Army. It was first formed on November 1 1986. The Army Aviation Corps is headed by a director-general with the rank of lieutenant general.

This details from this article will be useful for candidates appearing for the Government Exams.

## History of the Army Aviation Corps

The roots of the AAC can be traced back to the creation of the Army Aviation Wing of the Royal Air Force stationed in India during the height of World War II in 1942 and the subsequent formation of the Air Observation Post in 1947.

The Air Observation Post functioned as artillery spotters which helped in directing and spotting targets for artillery barrages. In the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971 the helicopters of the Air Observation Post provided crucial air support to ground units and spotting targets by flying close to the enemy lines.

The Army Aviation Corps was created as a separate formation on November 1 in 1986. It is the youngest corps of the Indian Army. Upon its formation, the AAC saw its first action during the Indian Intervention in the Sri Lankan Civil War. It provided aerial reconnaissance to the Indian Peacekeeping Forces, in the mostly jungle areas of Sri Lanka against Tamil Tigers.

The Corps was raised as a separate formation on November 1 in 1986. The AAC now draws its officers and men from all arms of the Army, including a significant number from the artillery.

Immediately after raising, the units of the Corps were pressed into action in Operation Pawan by the Indian Peacekeeping Forces, in the mostly jungle areas of Sri Lanka against the Tamil Tigers.

Over the years, the Corps has grown by additions of new units, equipment and ground assets, and along with this, its roles and capabilities also have grown. The AAC draws its ranks from all the arms of the India Army.

## Functions and role of the AAC

The AAC uses its helicopters for reconnaissance, casualty evacuation, supply drops, search and rescue. During peace times AAC helicopters participate in Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations.

The helicopters of the corps also act as aerial command posts should the situation ever arise.

In the modern-day battle formation, elements like infantry, short and long artillery, armoured formations and Army helicopters are closely linked with each other. These use the information and data points collected from the ground and airborne surveillance assets and satellites. Helicopters are a key element of this battlefield, which is going to become even more technology-intensive in the future.

The following aircraft are currently operated by the Army Aviation corps

1. HAL Dhruv
2. HAL Chetak
3. HAL Cheetah
4. Boeing AH-64 Apache Helicopter

### Future Plans of the Army Aviation Corps

In 2012, the army was evaluating helicopters from Kamov, Eurocopter and AgustaWestland for its light-helicopter contract for supplying troops stationed at high altitudes. The \$750 million contracts for the 197 helicopters intended to replace its 1970s Chetak and Cheetah helicopters for high-altitude surveillance and logistics.

The successful bidder would provide 60 helicopters in operating condition; the remaining 137 aircraft would be produced by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). The successful bidder was required to invest at least 30 per cent of the contract in India.

In December 2014, the Kamov Ka-226T was selected as a light utility helicopter to replace the Chetak and Cheetah while the HAL Light Utility Helicopter was developed. Kamov would build a production plant in India, and 197 helicopters would be purchased under the Make in India program. Of these 135 are earmarked for the Indian Army.

The army is planning to acquire the HAL Light Combat Helicopter, which is under development by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, to meet its requirements for a high-altitude—16,300 feet (5,000 m)—anti-armour and anti-infantry helicopter. It is also planning to acquire a 3-tonne, single-engine HAL Light Utility Helicopter for reconnaissance.