AVIATION MUSEUM FIRST IN TAIWAN TO EXHIBIT SUSPENDED PLANES

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The newly completed Aviation Education Exhibition Center in the southern city of Kaohsiung not only features an exterior design shaped like a UFO, but also has something unique inside -- it is the first museum in Taiwan where historically important planes are exhibited suspended from the ceiling.

The UFO exterior design is aimed at portraying the idea of an advanced high-tech aircraft carrying the older types of planes, said the center, which has on display a total 36 planes that have been retired from the Air Force, the Navy and the Army.

Nineteen of the aircraft are suspended, including an AT-6 fighter trainer, an F-84G fighter, a U-3A liaison aircraft and various other planes used between 1945 and 1967, when Republic of China

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forces were fighting Chinese communist forces.

Also hanging from the ceiling are an O-1 observation aircraft, a UH-1H helicopter, and three MiG fighters from China that were flown to Taiwan by Chinese defectors, according to the center.

Four other planes (one IL-28 bomber, two MiG-19s and one MiG-15) flown to Taiwan by Chinese defectors are also displayed on the ground floor, the center said.

Also exhibited on the ground include a C-47 transport plane (used between 1937 and 1945), a B-26 bomber and an F-104G fighter, employed between 1945 and 1967.

Others include an HU-16 rescue aircraft, an F-5F fighter and an S-2T anti-submarine aircraft, the center said. The S-2T played an important role in the defense of Taiwan against China in the 1990s.

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The center also features an exhibition on the Republic of China's War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945) and the subsequent development of the ROC military in the ensuing years.

Covering an area of 2.8 hectares, the facility was unveiled last August and is currently undergoing a trial run.

The Air Force Academy said it will commission a private company to run the center before it is formally opened to the public.

Since the center is located inside the Air Force Academy, which is part of the Gangshan Air Base,

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Chinese nationals and those from Hong Kong and Macau will not be allowed to visit, due to security concerns, according to the center.

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