

THE AVIATION MAGAZINE

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Nº: 41 March-April 2016

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- ✈ 8th International SAR-Meet NAS Nordholz, Germany
- ✈ Monino: The Air Force Museum of the Russian Federation
- ✈ Wings Over Houston Airshow, Houston, TX
- ✈ Our 2015 Best Air Show Award goes to...
- ✈ and so much more...



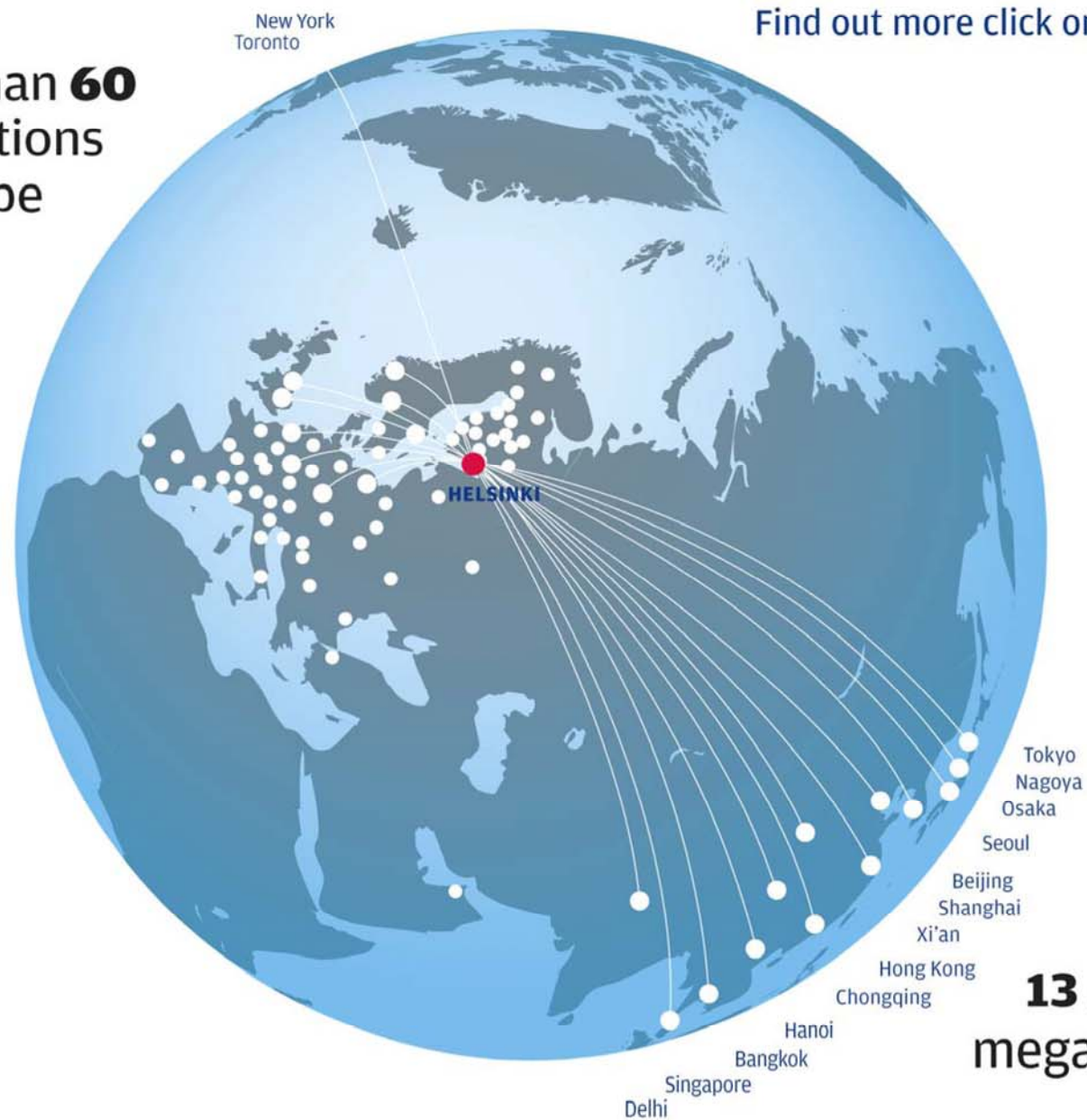
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Cover: Ray Kinney pilots the CAF's Curtiss P-40NP Warhawk, photo by Norman A Graf

Index page: Su-T4 at the Russian Air Force Museum, Monino, Russia, photo by Wolfgang Jarisch



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THE AVIATION MAGAZINE is published six times a year, by a Team of Volunteers interested in aviation. We are devoted to cover a wide range of aviation events ranging from air shows, air base visits, military exercises, civilian spotting, pilot and veteran interviews all with exceptional photography. **THE AVIATION MAGAZINE** is a leader in the e-magazine format since 2009, bringing exclusive and fascinating reports to our global aviation enthusiasts digitally.

Please note: we do not accept any unsolicited articles or images for publication.

Interested in joining us? We have (3) Volunteer Team positions available. We are looking for a Far East contributor, preferably from Japan, with good English communication skills, also for someone to cover the East and South-East portion of the USA, and for Marketing Person. If you are interested in becoming a contributor e-mail us with samples of your work:

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NEWS FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the 41st edition of **THE AVIATION MAGAZINE** with our revised bi-monthly date schedule. We are 100% mobile compliant on the Joomag magazine reader platform, <http://www.joomag.com/en/newsstand?q=the+aviation+magazine> meaning that you can see our magazine issues on your smartphones, and tablets too not just on desktops or laptops.

The 2016 season has not yet started as of the publishing. However, it will be an interesting season for all. Many proposed air shows dates share the same dates, and it will be a real scramble to cover several events at the same time. We remain positive that we can continue to give you the best coverage with our small team in 2016.

We finally had the time during the slower winter months to bring our readers a detailed look at one of the most interesting places for aircraft enthusiast in the world: The Russian Federation Air Force Museum in Monino, near Moscow. You can see our much anticipated Annual Best Air Show Award too!

We look forward to the 2016 air show season with a lot of enthusiasm, and to bringing you the "Best for Free"® e-based aviation magazine as we take you to aviation events "As close as you can get without being at an air show!"® Tell all your friends to like us on Facebook, follow us for the latest reviews and news on Twitter and to subscribe on Joomag to automatically receive the latest issue of **THE AVIATION MAGAZINE**.



©2015 Norman A. Graf

Round Canopy Parachute Team WWII Re-enactors at Wings Over Houston Airshow

2016 RACE CALENDAR



* to be confirmed.

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The MFG 5 is flying the Sea King Mk41 since 1975 and has 21 in its inventory, primarily being used for Search and Rescue. However, the Sea King is also used for tactical troop lift, vertical replenishment and MEDEVAC/CASEVAC. It can operate night and day, and in adverse weather conditions. When scrambled the crew with its helicopter is airborne in not more than 15 minutes during daytime and a maximum of 60 minutes at night. The area of responsibility of the MFG 5 is the Baltic Sea, the North Sea and the northern part of Schleswig Holstein. In 2015 the MFG 5 flew some 140 SAR missions.



The German Marinefliegergeschwader 5 (Naval Air Wing 5) was host to the 8th international SAR-Meet. Aircraft and aircrew from five nations met from August 13th to August 17th, 2015 at the Naval Air Station Nordholz to discuss new developments, procedures and international co-operation with respect to Search and Rescue operations. Key part of the SAR Meet was the Flying Challenge, consisting of three different tasks:

- 1) The navigation challenge was to follow a route with three waypoints at a speed of 90 KIAS (knots indicated air speed) in 500 ft above ground. The crew was given 30 minutes to prepare the route and to calculate the time over each waypoint. Electronic devices such as smart phones or computers were not allowed. This had to be done the old fashioned way with maps, aeronautical aviation charts, ruler and protractor. The

challenge was to be exact at the calculated time over the respective waypoint and at a specific landing spot.

- 2) Next was the hover challenge, starting with landing in an assigned area. There the crew was given a rope with a bucket attached to it. Then they had to hover a course with moving the bucket between two goalposts without touching the ground and not exceeding a certain height. After finishing the course the bucket and the rope had to be dropped in an area marked by a circle, followed by a precision landing on a certain spot.
- 3) Precision landing was the last challenge. There was a small mark on the taxiway. Within five minutes from take-off the pilot had to fly to this spot and land so that the first part of the helicopter that touches ground hits this small mark. For the Sea King this part had to be the tail wheel - a challenge of its own!

Eleven crews took part in the Flying Challenge from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Latvia, and the UK. The winner was the Austrian Team with their SA 316B Alouette III.



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- The Sea King HU5 from the Royal Navy, above inset and center.
- The Bo105P1 - German Army Aviation, performing the “bucket challenge” to hover a course while moving the bucket between two goalposts without touching the ground and not exceeding a certain height.
- UH-1D - German Army Aviation, inset below.



© 2015 Ralf P Walter





Mi-17-1V from Latvia

© 2015 Ralf P Walter



NH90 NFH from Belgium

© 2015 Ralf P Walter



The winner was the Austrian Team with their SA 316B Alouette III from Aigen

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Super Lynx Mk88A
German Navy

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MONINO AIR FORCE MUSEUM OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Article and photography by Wolfgang Jarisch and Laszlo Nyary

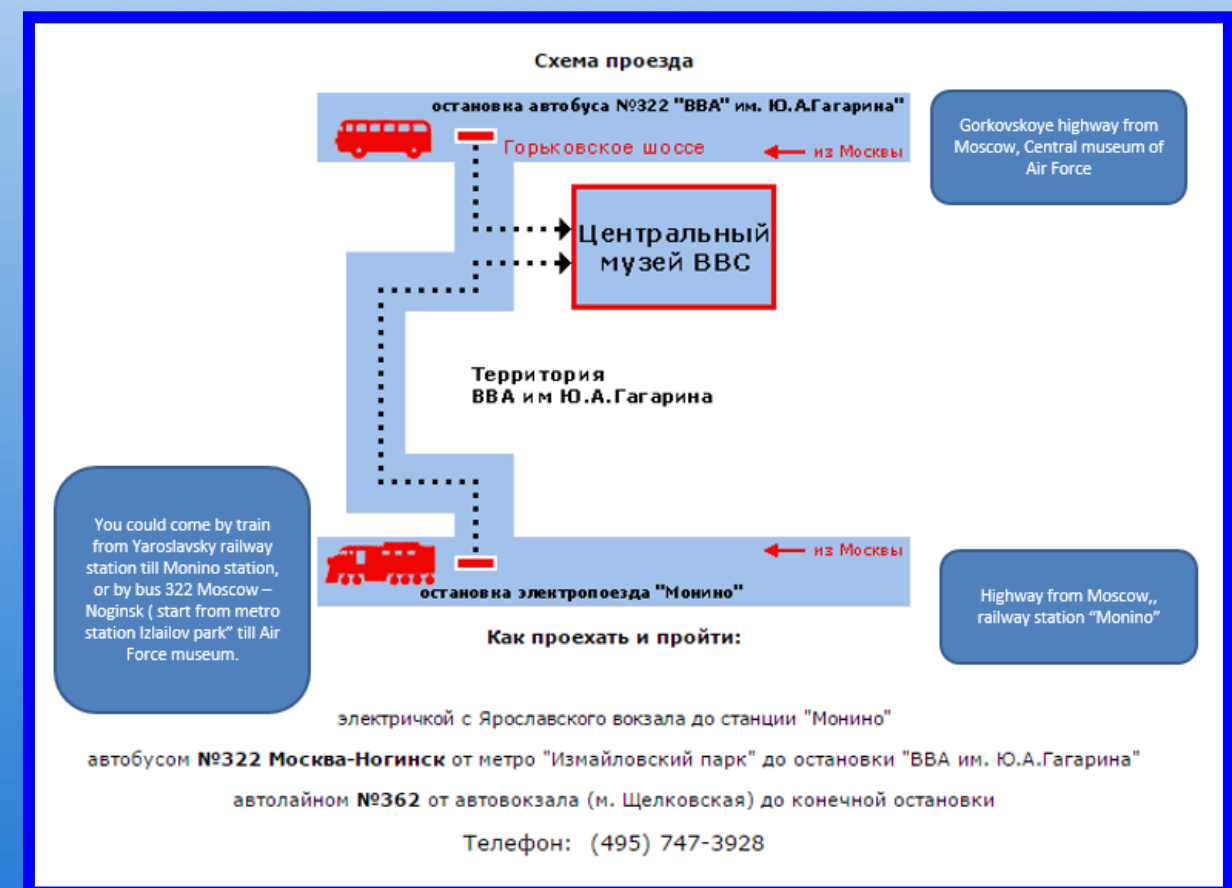




Monino, may not mean much to average air show enthusiast however, to those who are truly interested in aviation it is a must place to visit, at least once in a lifetime. It is not exactly in anyone's neighbourhood, unless of course one lives in Moscow, Russia.

The official name of the place is The Russian Federation Air Force Museum, it is also known as The Central Museum of the Air Forces at Monino. Either way, it is the largest and best aviation museum in Russia, and it is in the top 10 places in the world that exhibits aircraft.

The museum is located approximately 24 miles north-east from Moscow, and was until a few years ago the home of the Gagarin Air Force academy. The museum opened in 1958, and during the former USSR era, one required a special permission to enter the facilities if one was from the West. Now, it is open to the public on weekdays from 09:30 to 15:30 and on Saturdays from 09:30 to 14:00. Avoid getting there between 1300 and 1430 since the ticket desk will be on a lunch break. The museum is closed on Wednesday and Sunday. If one goes, to see all the aircraft both indoors and out, it will take several hours, and would recommend getting there at opening and during a weekday. The best way of course is by car, but it can be reached via public transit via bus or by railway, see below.



We had the opportunity to visit the museum twice; in 2006 by Laszlo, and more recently in August 2015 by Wolfgang. Currently the admission is 150 Rubles per person. The museum consists of a large outdoor airpark and two hangars. The exhibits include from the beginning of the Russian aviation to modern times, and include many experimental and one of a kind aircraft. The airpark is being the main attraction for most, while these are stationary exhibits, there are some movement of aircraft due to re-painting, etc. I've made a layout or map of the airpark, indicating the location and the make and model of the aircraft from 2006 and also from 2015. The layout of the airpark is very accurate, taken from a satellite image, while the aircraft are shown in approximate scale only relative to each other's size.



© 2006 Laszlo Nyary







As one enters the "airpark", the first attraction to the left is the Mil-V12 (NATO reporting name Homer), the worlds largest helicopter, which could carry 196 passengers. This twin rotor monster still holds the 1969 record for carrying a load of 40,000 kg (88,000 lb) to an altitude of 2,255 m (7400 feet). Only two were built and the project was eventually cancelled in 1974. The Mil-V12 has been repainted since 2006, and the Mig-29 and the Su-35 prototype has been moved to another area, as seen from images above and top right.

To the right of the entrance is Tupolev row and the first aircraft is the Tupolev Tu-4 (Nato: Bull) as shown below, is a piston-engined Soviet strategic bomber that served the Soviet Air Force from the late 1940s to mid-1960s. It was a reverse-engineered copy of the American-made Boeing B-29 Superfortress that crashed in China in 1944.

One thing that will be quite evident to the visitors is that all the aircraft displayed outside are exposed to the harsh Russian winters, and many are in need of refurbishing and a new paint, before they rust away.



As one heads towards the Hangar 1 (building A on the maps) one can find two versions of the Tu-16 (NATO Badger) A and K supersonic bombers, the A version is shown below. There are two versions of the Tu-22 (NATO Blinder) which is fixed wing supersonic bomber and the Tu-22M (Nato Backfire) with variable sweep wings. The row ends with the Tupolev Tu-128 (NATO Fiddler) prototype which was a long-range interceptor aircraft introduced by the Soviet Union in the 1960s.

Inside the hangars as mentioned earlier one will find on display relics of the Russian aviation all the way from the beginning to the Great Patriotic War, as WWII is known in Russia. Some are only replicas while some are the actual aircraft. Several warbirds from the WWII era were displayed outside in 2006 and now can be found inside. However, the main attraction is clearly the more than 90+ aircraft parked outside.



Tu-144 (Russian Concorde)



The airpark is well organized based upon the name of design office, such as Antonov, Mikoyan-Gurevich aka MiG, Sukhoi etc, although some are intermixed, due to the extreme size of the aircraft.

There are several interesting such as the Tu-144 (Russian Concorde), the rare Myasishchev 3M (M-4) strategic long range bomber, NATO reporting name Bison (production only lasted until 1963. Three of them were converted into the VM-T "Atlant" heavy lift aircraft using the piggy-back above the fuselage method. The single vertical fin/rudder was replaced with two large rectangular fin/rudders at the tips of the horizontal stabilizers to improve control due to the turbulence caused by the cargo. One of them can be seen at Zhukovsky Airport, near Moscow. And, truly one of a kind aircraft on display such as the Su 100 (T4) built mostly from titanium, above, similar to the North American Aviation XB-70 Valkyrie.

Currently there are two Tu-95 (NATO name: "Bear") Tu-95LL and the Tu-95MS on display as well as the passenger airliner derivative was called Tu-114. The Bear is a large, four-engine turboprop with counter rotating props strategic bomber, missile platform, and airborne surveillance aircraft. First flown in 1952, the Tu-95 entered service with the Soviet Union in 1956 and is expected to serve the Russian Air Force until at least 2040.

Unfortunately, one of the most interesting aircraft on the far left end of the airpark is the Bartini Beriev VVA-14, [Vertikal'no-Vzletayuschaya Amphibia (vertical take-off amphibious aircraft)] one of the two prototypes, in a truly dilapidated condition, such a shame! It looks like it is from the Star Wars, although it was designed in the early 1970s. Designed by Italian-born designer Robert Bartini, the aircraft was

Myasishchev 3M (M-4) "Bison" at Monino, main image. The VM-T "Atlant" variant of the M-4, heavy lift aircraft using the piggy-back above the fuselage method, displayed at MAKS at Zhukovsky Airport, near Moscow, inset below.



to take-off from the water and fly at high speed over long distances, it was to make true flights at high altitude, but also have the capability of 'flying' efficiently just above the sea surface, using aerodynamic ground effect. This truly odd looking aircraft was involved in 107 test flights, with a total flight time of 103 hours. After Bartini's death in 1974, the project slowed and eventually drew to a close. The only remaining VVA-14, No. 19172, was retired to Monino in 1987 in a dismantled state, where it carries the number '10687' and 'Aeroflot' markings which are now barely visible. The image is from 2006 below.





The MiG alley section presents a great variety of aircraft from the Mikoyan-Gurevich design bureau, from their earliest jet types such as the MiG 9 to the venerable MiG-31 interceptor NATO "Foxhound". The MiG-31 has the distinction of being one of the fastest combat jets built so far in the world, with a top speed of Mach 3.2 however, high-altitude speed is temperature-redlined to Mach 2.83 as above that speeds pose unacceptable hazards to engine and airframe life in routine use. While the MiG-31 received several upgrades to the MiG-31BM and MiG-31BSM standards, and are expected to remain in service until 2030, such fast interceptors are being replaced with much faster S-400 SAM defensive systems. Then there is the Ye-152, the record breaking aircraft, that established three world records in the early 1960s:

- On October 7, 1961. the test pilot Fedotov, established the world record of speed along the closed by 100 km route. Is achieved the average speed of 2401 km/h.
- On July 7, 1962. by the test pilot Mosolovym, is established the world record of speed. The average speed of 2681,7 km/h is achieved on the speed test course 15-25 km in two directions. In one of the approaches the aircraft developed the speed more than 3000 km/h.
- On September 11, 1962. the test pilot Ostapenko, established the world record of height 22670 m with a sustained the speed of 2500 km/h.

While the Ye-152 was never put into production it led to the development of the dual engined MiG-23, MiG-25 and ultimately to the MiG-31.

Looking like a large shoe the MiG-105 EPOS (Experimental Passenger Orbital Aircraft) was a manned test vehicle to explore low-speed handling and landing, one of the test pilots was Gherman Titov, the second man to orbit the Earth in a Vostok 2. This project was cancelled in 1978.



- Above is a Sukhoi Su-7 variant with skis known as S-26 with ski undercarriage, double brake parachute and JATO boosters to operate from snow covered or rough/unpaved fields.
- The Myasishchev M-17 NATO "Mystic-A" is a high-altitude aircraft, initially developed to shoot down US reconnaissance balloons drifting over the USSR in the mid-1950s. The M-17 is armed with the Gryazev-Shipunov GSh-23 is a twin-barreled 23 mm cannon with 600 rounds per gun in a dorsal gun turret. However, it was never used in this role.



There are several helicopters on display mostly from Mil Helicopters covering several decades, including the Mil-26 NATO "Halo" world's largest helicopter in production. Apart from the standard Mil Mi-6 NATO "Hook", there is another rare variant the Mi-6PZh (PZh - pozharnyy - Russian for fire fighting) helicopter prototype with a steerable water cannon in the nose, painted in red and white, as shown to the left. In 2006 according to my Russian guide a former Russian Air Force officer, this particular helicopter participated in the Chernobyl accident disaster response team along with several Mi-26s, spraying deactivating liquids in immediate proximity to the nuclear reactor. The crews were protected with filter systems and anti-radiation protective screens.



- Sikorsky S-22 Ilya Mouremets, replica largest bomber in WWI, left top
- Petlyakov Pe-2 "Buck" WWII, left middle
- Bereznyak-Isayev BI-1 rocket plane replica, experimental WWII fighter, left bottom.

- Polikarpov U2 (Po-2vs) "Mule" trainer from WWII, right top
- Ilyushin IL-2 "Bark" WWII ground attack aircraft, right bottom





© 2006 Laszlo Nyary



The Tupolev ANT-25 from the early 1930s was a Soviet long-range experimental aircraft, designed by Pavel Sukhoi, who later on formed his own Design Bureau. First constructed in 1933, it was used by the Soviet Union for a number of record-breaking flights, above. A commemorative stamp illustration of the Moscow-San Jacinto transpolar flight to celebrate the 75th Anniversary was issued in 2012, far left.



Tu-22M3 NATO "Backfire C" Cockpit, with the white nuclear flash covers in place, to the left.



The cockpit of the Tu-144 above.

The interiors of Russian passenger aircraft build during the USSR era, were always very Spartan, to say the least.

- First class seating right middle
- Business class seating right bottom
- Tourist class that was even more cramped, right mid bottom.



WINGS OVER HOUSTON AIRSHOW

Article and photography by Norman A. Graf

The Wings Over Houston Airshow took place October 17-18 at Ellington Field in Houston, Texas under clear blue skies and with perfect temperatures. As usual, the show was dominated by the large number of warbirds, but with civilian aerobatics, the Navy's Super Hornet Tactical Demonstration, the Coast Guard's Search and Rescue demo and two jet teams, there was something for everyone. The Thunderbirds shared the skies this year with the Breitling jet team who were flying their final demonstration of their 2015 North American Tour.

The gates opened promptly at 0800. With so much going on in the sky and on the ground it always makes sense to get there early. Photographers had the option of purchasing a Sunrise Photo Tour Pass or Photo Pit Pass to gain early access or elevated risers, tent area, drinking water, and restrooms in a chalet area. The Legends & Heroes Tent opened at 9AM. Almost all of the warbirds on static display fly during the day, so the whole hot ramp is closed for viewing at 11AM. The number of military aircraft on display is still a shadow of its former self due to the effects of the federal budget sequestration, but there were several aircraft from the US Army, Air Force and Navy as well as several NASA aircraft.

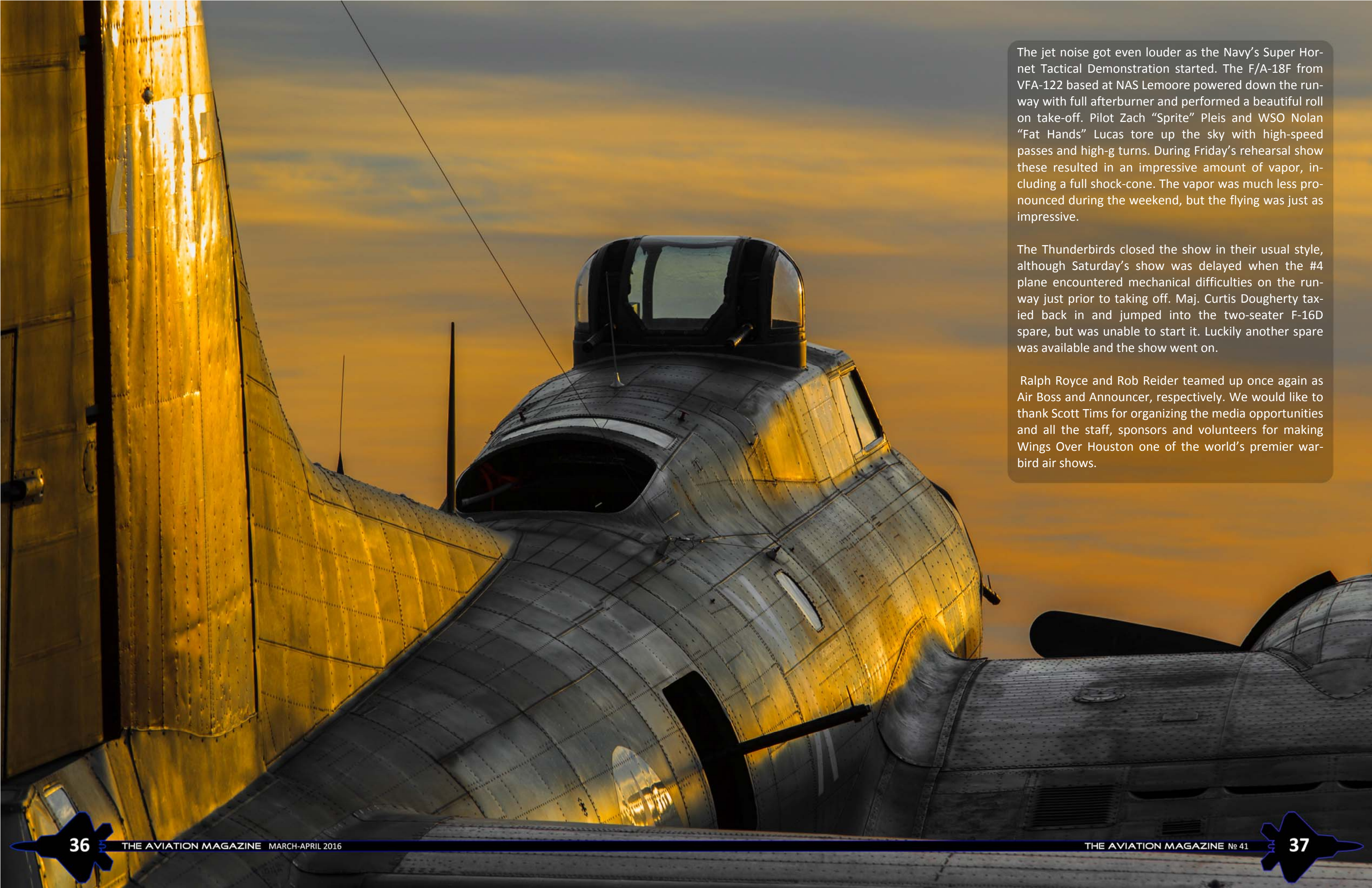
The RE/MAX Parachute jumpers opened the show at 11AM, flying in the US national and Texas state flags. A Coast Guard MH-65D Dolphin helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station Houston presented a Search and Rescue demonstration to start off the day's flying. David Martin then put on a very energetic aerobatic show in the Breitling CAP 232. He was followed later in the day by local aerobatic legend Debby Rihn-Harvey, also flying a CAP 232, and newcomer Kevin Coleman in the Extra 300.

Tora! Tora! Tora! began their demonstration just after noon and soon the skies were filled with a multitude of aircraft flying from left and right, diving in from high above and making high-speed passes down on the deck. The smoke from the massive amount of pyrotechnics often obscured the planes, providing a real-

istic recreation of the morning of December 7, 1941 at Pearl Harbor. The warbird extravaganza continued with the trainer fly-by, featuring examples of the training aircraft that aspiring airmen would have to master on their way to becoming pilots. Primary, basic and advanced trainers such as the Stearman, Valiant and Texan all flew by in various formations. The European Theater demonstration opened with a bombing pass by the B-25J Mitchell "Yellow Rose" and B-17G Flying Fortress "Texas Raiders." A Messerschmitt 262 jet fighter was scrambled to intercept, which soon attracted the attention of a Spitfire MkIX, a P-51D Mustang "Dakota Kid" and two P-40 Warhawks. After a simulated dogfight between these adversaries, the Me262, Spitfire and Mustang joined up for a beautiful and very rare formation flyby. The Spitfire split off and the Mustang and Messerschmitt returned for a few passes. With air superiority now established a C-60 Lode-star "Goodtime Gal" flew over. Members of the Round Canopy Parachute Team jumped from the transport, re-enacting the missions of WWII paratroopers. On Sunday the jump was aborted due to high winds, but one of the skydivers had already exited the aircraft. He drifted into the crowd, landed on a vendor's tent and broke his leg. Then it was time to move to the Pacific Theater of Operations. The action started with low-level passes by the Douglas SBD Dauntless, Grumman TBM Avenger and Curtiss SB2C Helldiver, complete with simulated bomb and torpedo explosions. They were followed by the fighters: Vought F4U Corsair, Grumman F7F Tigercat and two F8F Bearcats and a Mitsubishi A6M2 Zero.

The Breitling Jet Team, composed primarily of ex-French Air Force pilots flying seven L-39 trainers, ended their 2015 North American tour at Houston and they pulled out all the stops. They began their show with a series of smooth aerobatic formations, transitioning from one shape into another. In the second half the tempo increased and the maneuvers became more energetic and exciting. They concluded their show with a dynamic break-out aimed at the crowd, and deployed fireworks as they went vertical. If you missed their show this year, you'll have another chance in 2016, as they have extended their North American tour.





The jet noise got even louder as the Navy's Super Hornet Tactical Demonstration started. The F/A-18F from VFA-122 based at NAS Lemoore powered down the runway with full afterburner and performed a beautiful roll on take-off. Pilot Zach "Sprite" Pleis and WSO Nolan "Fat Hands" Lucas tore up the sky with high-speed passes and high-g turns. During Friday's rehearsal show these resulted in an impressive amount of vapor, including a full shock-cone. The vapor was much less pronounced during the weekend, but the flying was just as impressive.

The Thunderbirds closed the show in their usual style, although Saturday's show was delayed when the #4 plane encountered mechanical difficulties on the runway just prior to taking off. Maj. Curtis Dougherty taxied back in and jumped into the two-seater F-16D spare, but was unable to start it. Luckily another spare was available and the show went on.

Ralph Royce and Rob Reider teamed up once again as Air Boss and Announcer, respectively. We would like to thank Scott Tims for organizing the media opportunities and all the staff, sponsors and volunteers for making Wings Over Houston one of the world's premier war-bird air shows.



Grumman TBM-3 Avenger



Curtiss SB2C Helldiver



Douglas SBD Dauntless



Grumman F7F Tigercat



Curtiss P-40N Warhawk



Tora! Tora! Tora! Val replica



Tora! Tora! Tora! Val replica



Tora! Tora! Tora! Kate replica



Tora! Tora! Tora! Zero replica, main image
Zero replicas , inset

Messerschmitt Me262 B-1a, left top and North American B-25J Mitchell “Yellow Rose” left bottom



North American P-51D Mustang, Messerschmitt Me262 and Supermarine Spitfire MkIX in formation top right Round Canopy Parachute Team WWII Re-enactors jumping from the Lockheed C-60 Lodestar “Goodtime Gal” right bottom





F/A-18F from VFA-122 based at NAS Lemoore pulling a massive cone of vapor on top, and USAF Thunderbirds #5 driver with a killer smile, inset.

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POST CARDS FROM FRIENDS



Best regards from France!

Jonah



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PRIORITY
PRIORITAIRE



ARMÉE DE L'AIR

- Dassault Mirage –2000N over France, top left
- Image of a pilot, bottom left



Hey Laszlo,
Best regards from Israel!
Moni



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- Boeing 707-3L6C Re'em with (3) Boeing F-15I Ra'am, top right
- Boeing F-15I Ra'am taking off, mid right
- Boeing F-15I Ra'am landing, bottom right





Supermarine 361 Spitfire
LF9E, left top

Boeing AH-64A Peten, left
bottom

Bell AH-1F Tsefa, right top

Boeing AH-64D Saraf,
right bottom



AIRPORT SPOTTING

Images and locations as noted



Air Caraïbes Airbus A-330-200 top and Royal Australian Air Force Boeing 737-7DT mid image, both at Malta International Airport MLA/LMML by Ray Biagio Pace
Ghadames Air Transport Fokker 70/100 at Malta International Airport MLA/LMML by Christopher Mifsud

Jet2 Holidays Boeing 737-8K2 (WL) top, Primera Air Nordic Boeing 737-800 middle, Nouvelair-Tunisie Airbus A320-214 bottom, all at Malta International Airport MLA/LMML by Ray Biagio Pace





Europe Airpost Airlines Boeing 737-700 at Rhodes Airport RHO/LGRP, Greece top image. Pegasus Airlines Boeing 737-800 at Tel Aviv, Ben Gurion International Airport TLV/LLBG, Israel mid image. Alaska Horizon Airlines Bombardier Dash 8-400 at Seattle –Tacoma International Airport SEA/KSEA, USA. All images by Moni Shafir.



Transavia Airlines Boeing 737 Next Gen, top image, and Ukraine Air Alliance AN-12KB mid image both at Malta International Airport MLA/LMML by Christopher Mifsud. MNG Airlines Airbus A300-B4 and Iberia Airlines Airbus A319 both at Tel Aviv, Ben Gurion International Airport TLV/LLBG, Israel, bottom image, by Moni Shafir.





Alaska Airlines Boeing 737-800 with Wild Alaska Seafood (top image) and Disneyworld (bottom image) liveries at Seattle –Tacoma International Airport SEA/KSEA, USA. All images by Moni Shafir.



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US MARINE CORPS BASE VISITS

REPORT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY RALF PETER WALTER



Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point and MCAS New River are major air bases of the US Marine Corps on the US east coast. They are located close to the Atlantic coast in North Carolina. The aviation units at these bases fall under the command of the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (2nd MAW), headquartered at MCAS Cherry Point. A total of 25 squadrons from three Marine Aircraft Groups (MAG-14, MAG-26 and MAG-29) are under the command of 2nd MAW and they build the Aviation Combat Element (ACE) of the II Marine Expeditionary Force. The ACE conducts air operations such as anti-air warfare, offensive air support, assault support, electronic warfare and air reconnaissance. Aircraft and personnel deploy worldwide be it land based or on board of amphibious assault ships.



Boeing AV-8B Harrier II of the VMAT-203 MCAS Cherry Point.



MCAS Cherry Point

The sign at the gate of MCAS Cherry Point reads "*Pardon our noise, it's the sound of freedom*". The noise comes from a wide variety of aircraft. Jets, propeller aircraft and helicopters in 12 squadrons share the base. MCAS Cherry Point is home to the last three of the HH-46E *Pedro* and the EA-6B *Prowler*, which are still in active duty with the US military. The HH-46E, used for Search And Rescue will stay in service until 2016, the SAR mission then will be returned to the US Coast Guard. The EA-6B will no longer fly from aircraft carriers but will be deployed on land bases to conduct Electronic Counter Measure Missions. According to current plans the last Prowler Squadron will deactivate in 2019. VMAT-203 conducts all AV-8B pilot training within the Marine Corps. Several times a year they deploy to MCAS Yuma for live bomb training.

Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron	MAG-14
VMGR-252 Otis	KC-130J
Marine Attack Squadron	MAG-14
VMA-223 Bulldogs	AV-8B
VMA-231 Ace of Spades	AV-8B
VMA-542 Tigers	AV-8B
VMAT-203 Hawks	TAV-8B
Marine Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron	MAG-14
VMAQT-1 Banshees	EA-6B
VMAQ-2 Death Jesters	EA-6B
VMAQ-3 Moon Dogs	EA-6B
VMAQ-4 Seahawks	EA-6B
Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron	MAG-14
VMU-2 Night Owls	RQ-7B
Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron	MAG-29
HMH-366 Hammerheads	CH-53E
Marine Transport Squadron	
VMR-1 Roadrunners	HH-46E, C-9B, UC-35



Sikorsky CH-53E Super Stallion of the HMH-366 Hammerheads, MCAS Cherry Point.



Boeing HH-46E Sea Knight of the VMR-1 Search & Rescue, MCAS Cherry Point.



Northrop Grumman EA-6B Prowler of the VMAQT-1 Banshees, MCAS Cherry Point.



Lockheed Martin KC-130J tanker of the VMGR-252 Otis, MCAS Cherry Point.



McDonnell Douglas C-9B Skytrain II of VMR-1 taking off, MCAS Cherry Point.



MCAS New River

MCAS New River is a helicopter and tiltrotor base, currently home to MAG-26 and MAG-29 with a total of 13 squadrons. All East Coast MV-22B *Osprey* are based on MCAS New River. VMMT-204 *Raptors* is the Marine Corps' only squadron providing training to both Marine and Air Force *Osprey* pilots, Marine crew chiefs and units in the use and maintenance of the tiltrotor aircraft. All flight training for newly commissioned Naval Aviators, conversion pilots, refresher pilots, and enlisted aircrew in the CH-53E Super Stallion is the mission of HMHT-302 *Phoenix*. Current plans are to deactivate HMLA-467 by the end of 2016 and to start the transition from the AH-1W to the AH-1Z with HMLA-167 in 2017.

Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron	MAG-26
VMM-162 <i>Golden Eagles</i>	MV-22B
VMM-261 <i>Raging Bulls</i>	MV-22B
VMM-263 <i>Thunder Eagles</i>	MV-22B
VMM-264 <i>Black Knights</i>	MV-22B
VMM-266 <i>Fighting Griffins</i>	MV-22B
VMM-365 <i>Blue Knights</i>	MV-22B
VMMT-204 <i>Raptors</i>	MV-22B
Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron	MAG-29
HMLA-167 <i>Warriors</i>	AH-1W, UH-1Y
HMLA-269 <i>The Gunrunners</i>	AH-1W, UH-1Y
HMLA-467 <i>Sabers</i>	AH-1W, UH-1Y
Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron	MAG-29
HMH-461 <i>Iron Horse</i>	CH-53E
HMH-464 <i>Condors</i>	CH-53E
HMHT-302 <i>Phoenix</i>	CH-53E



Bell Boeing MV-22B Ospreys of the VMM-264 Black Knights on the apron at MCAS New River



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Re-installing the prop/rotor cowling above.

Osprey 02 parked adjacent to 00 below was featured on the cover of our № 13 issue, when the Blue Knights visited Toronto in September 2011.



Bell Boeing MV-22B Ospreys of the VMM-365 Blue Knights, with wings stowed and rotors folded above, and parked on the apron at MCAS New River, main image.



GUNRUNNERS



Bell UH-1Y Venom on top and the Bell AH-1W Super Cobra, bottom image, of the HMLA-269 The Gunrunners, on the apron at MCAS New River.





Bell AH-1 W Super Cobra of the HMLA-167 Warriors MCAS New River on the apron at MCAS New River, above.



The Sikorsky CH-53E Super Stallion (the largest and heaviest helicopter in the US military) of the HMHT-302 Phoenix, on the apron at MCAS New River, below.





The Sikorsky CH-53E Super Stallion of the HMHT-461 Iron Horse, receiving maintenance check on the apron at MCAS New River, below.



We would like to thank the Public Affairs Office of 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, MCAS Cherry Point and MCAS New River for making this report possible.



STAR WARS CANYON AND THE JEDI TRANSITION

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY NORMAN A GRAF

Boeing F/A-18F Super Hornet below



To most people, the terms “Star Wars Canyon” and the “JEDI Transition” immediately evoke thoughts of “a galaxy far, far away.” However, aviation enthusiasts think not of the science-fiction movie franchise, but of the low-level military training route in southern California.

There are 20,000 square miles of military training airspace spread out over the Mojave Desert. Luckily, however, there is a pinch-point that concentrates the low-level flying and even better, it is located within Death Valley National Park, making it accessible to the general public. Rainbow Canyon, as it is officially known, is a shortcut between two legs of the military’s Sidewinder Low Level Route. The military refers to it as “Star Wars Canyon,” and the shortcut is known as the “JEDI Transition.”

Aircraft of all types routinely fly through at low level, but photographers flock here to catch the fast jets snaking their way deep within the bowels of the canyon. A pullout, named Father Crowley Vista, is situated at the head of the canyon just off Highway 190 west of Panamint Springs and provides an excellent location to photograph the action. However, observing aircraft passing through the “JEDI Transition” is hit-or-miss. Although aircraft from Edwards AFB, NAWS China Lake, NAS Lemoore, Fresno Air National Guard Base and Nellis AFB all make regular use of this complex, there are no published flying schedules. If you go, be prepared for long periods of inactivity punctuated by mere seconds of action as the jets fly by at high speeds. Here are some photos we took on a recent visit.



- RAF C-130J Super Hercules, left page
- F/A-18E Super Hornet, top right
- F/A-18F Super Hornet, bottom right





"Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're gonna get." Here is a sampler.

- F/A-18F Super Hornet, top left
- Tornado GR4 from the Royal Air Force, was a real surprise, bottom left
- F/A-18E Super Hornet, top right
- F/A-18F Super Hornet, bottom right



El Centro Photocall, November 17, 2015

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY NORMAN A GRAF



Grumman C-2 Greyhound, VRC-30 "Providers", NAS North Island

Twice a year, Naval Air Facility El Centro opens its doors and invites photographers from around the world on board. The year-round good weather and proximity to hundreds of square miles of bombing and gunnery ranges attract a wide variety of aircraft, making this photocall very popular. The facility benefits by having its story told through articles, photos and videos. Attendees benefit by getting an up-close and personal view of military training activities mere feet away from an active runway. Win-win.

For further details about NAF El Centro and a review of our previous visit earlier in 2015, please see our review at http://theaviationmagazine.com/2015_El_Centro_photocall.htm. During that Winter photocall the Blue Angels performed two full air show demonstrations, which limited both the number of participants and the amount of training flights by other squadrons. For this visit, approximately 100 photographers assembled outside the main gate of NAFEC on the morning of November 17. Kris Haugh, Public Affairs Officer (PAO), and members of his team met us and soon had everyone assembled on base for the safety briefing. We had all received detailed safety instructions via email but Kris went through each of the items once again. After this detailed safety briefing, we were warmly greeted by Commanding Officer Captain William Doster and Executive Officer Commander Adam Schlismann.

Then it was time to head for the flightline. It didn't take long for everyone to find a place along runway 8/26 and settle in for a long day of photography. By the end of the day we had seen over three dozen different aircraft take off and land only fifty feet away. The majority of the aircraft and flights were student pilots earning their wings in the T-45C Goshawk. The amount of time and effort required simply to gain proficiency flying these high-performance jets is amazing. Equally as impressive were the training flights conducted by the active duty squadrons, primarily flying Super Hornets, Growlers and Harriers.

Many of the aircraft took off loaded with training bombs or missiles, heading out to the ranges to practice delivering their ordnance. Even these veterans performed multiple touch-and-go landings, improving their performance and perfecting their techniques. Although you really have to be there to fully appreciate the experience we hope that the accompanying photos provide a sense of the intensity of the training which goes on here. It's often said that "Practice makes perfect" and after our visit it's clear that NAF El Centro is the perfect place to practice.

The Aviation Magazine would like to thank Kristopher Haugh and the members of his team in the Public Affairs Office for arranging this visit, and Commanding Officer Captain William Doster and Executive Officer Commander Adam Schlismann for their hospitality in allowing this photocall to take place. It's hard to imagine a military base more welcoming and accommodating to such a large group of aviation photographers.

Aircraft included:

Boeing EA-18G Growler, VAQ-129 "Vikings", NAS Whidbey Island (1)
Boeing EA-18G Growler, VAQ-130 "Zappers", NAS Whidbey Island (9)
Boeing F/A-18E Super Hornet, VFA-122 "Flying Eagles", NAS Lemoore (1)
Boeing F/A-18F Super Hornet, VFA-122 "Flying Eagles", NAS Lemoore (5)
McDonnell Douglas TAV-8B Harrier II, VMAT-203 "Hawks", MCAS Cherry Point (2)
McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Harrier II, VMAT-203 "Hawks", MCAS Cherry Point (4)
Grumman C-2 Greyhound, VRC-30 "Providers", NAS North Island (1)
McDonnell Douglas T-45C Goshawk, VT-7 "Eagles", NAS Meridian (19)
Bell AH-1Z Super Cobra/Viper of HMLA-267 "Stingers" from MCB Camp Pendleton (1)
Bell AH-1Z Super Cobra/Viper of HMLA-169 "Vipers" from MCB Camp Pendleton (2)
Bell UH-1Y Super Huey/Venom of HMLA-267 "Stingers" from MCB Camp Pendleton (1)

Boeing EA-18G Growler taking off...



- 1 of the 19 McDonnell Douglas T-45C Goshawks, above
- Boeing EA-18G Growler, VAQ-129 "Vikings", NAS Whidbey Island. This is the 100th Growler built! below



- Bell AH-1Z Super Cobra/Viper, above,
- Bell UH-1Y Super Huey/Venom, below, both from MCB Camp Pendleton .





All the McDonnell Douglas Harriers from VMAT-203 "Hawks", MCAS Cherry Point. Some are shown with practice bombs and missiles. AV-8B Harrier II top left, AV-8B Harrier II with 20mm gun pack top right and (2) TAV-8B Harrier II, on the runway ready to take off!





THE PLANES OF FAME AIRSHOW

Photography as noted

For 2015, based upon our air show visits in the USA, Canada and Europe, our over all winner was [“The Planes of Fame Airshow”](#), (click on link for review on our web site) held annually in Chino, CA, is a must-see show for any warbird enthusiast. In addition to featuring the museum’s extensive flying collection, the show attracts aircraft from around the country and each year has a different emphasis. “A Salute to Veterans” was the theme for the 2015 Planes of Fame Air Show. Nearly 50 aircraft performed for the record crowds of 30,000 and over a dozen veterans shared their experiences in panel discussions. In addition to the warbirds the air show featured modern tactical demonstrations by the US Air Force’s premier fighter aircraft, the F-22 Raptor, and the Canadian Force’s CF-18 Hornet. Aerobatic performances from biplanes to jetplanes rounded out the aerial entertainment. New this year was the addition of a preview day and twilight show on Friday.

Other North American air shows were contenders, like last year’s winner Wings over Houston in the USA, as well as the Warbirds Over the Beach. For Europe the best was [the Flying Legends at Duxford](#) due to all the old timer warbirds, while RIAT at RAF Fairford, was almost as good that featured more modern aircraft, both located in the UK.

Please visit our site at [TheAviationMagazine.com](#) to read all the reviews.



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The Flying Legends at Duxford - Best of Europe

THE AVIATION MAGAZINE

As close as you can get without being at an air show!



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