

THE AVIATION MAGAZINE



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No: 42 May-June 2016
Volume 7, Issue 3



- ✈ Canadian Douglas A-4N Skyhawks at Wittmund, Germany
- ✈ Red Bull Air Race World Championship: Abu Dhabi (UAE)
- ✈ Training in Sion by the Swiss Air Force
- ✈ Thunder over Arizona Airshow, D-M AFB, Tucson, USA
- ✈ and so much more...

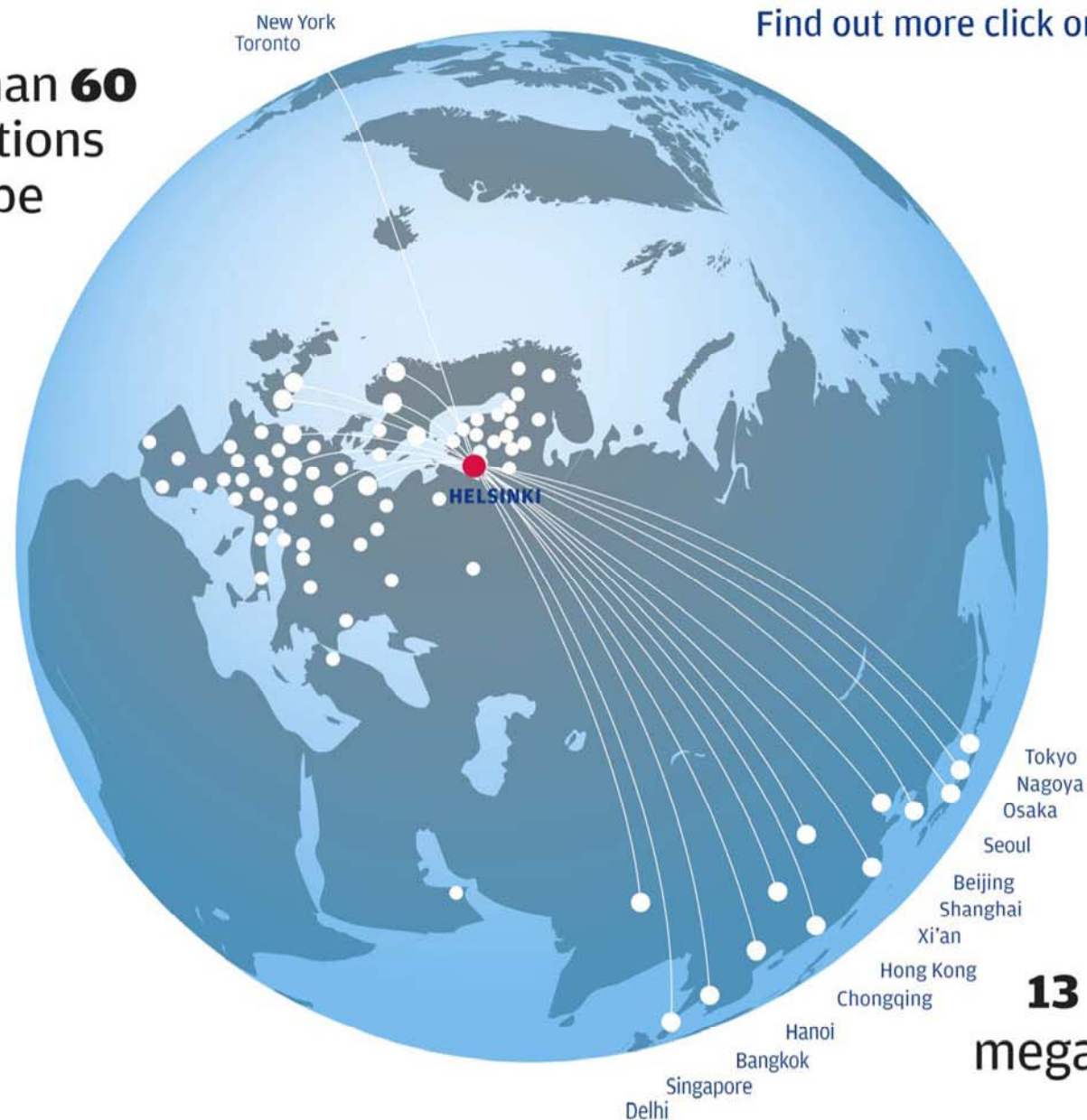
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Cover: Staffel 18 Pilot of the Swiss Air Force during the Exercise at Sion, photo by Peter Thivessen

Index page: Canadian A-4N Skyhawks at Wittmund, Germany, photo by Peter Thivessen



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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 42nd edition of **THE AVIATION MAGAZINE**. Time certainly flies and the 2016 air show season started off with a bang in North America, and we were there to cover it.

The 2016 air show season schedule has been on our sites now for a number of months, [click here to view it](#), this covers events worldwide. In this issue we are featuring NAF El Centro, CA, the first show for the Blue Angels, and Thunder & Lightning Over Arizona from Davis-Monthan AFB, the first show for the Thunderbirds for the 2016 air show season. Additionally, we covered the Los Angeles County Air Show that was a delight for warbird enthusiasts as illustrated in the image below. We also have several air base visits in the USA, Germany and Switzerland as well as the Red Bull Air Racing from Abu Dhabi, UAE, too, to give our readers a great variety of events to feast their eyes on.

We look forward to bringing you many more air shows in 2016 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**.



Warbird formation at the Los Angeles County Air Show: B-25,P-51D, TBM-3, Spitfire MkIX , P-40K and FM-2, left to right.



Canadian Douglas A-4N Skyhawks at Wittmund, Germany

Article and photography by Peter Thivessen



Discovery Air Defence Services (DADS) a private Canadian company has been established since the beginning of 2015 at Wittmund Air Base, as a service provider for the German Army. DADS is the successor to the previous service provider BAE Systems, operated by the BAe subsidiary E.I.S. Aircraft GmbH, which flew since 2001 from the air base Wittmund as target simulators for the German Luftwaffe. Wittmund is also the home base of Taktische Luftwaffengruppe "Richthofen" (TaktLwGrp "R") with Eurofighter.

DADS, is based out of Pointe Claire, suburb of Montreal, in Quebec, Canada. Discovery Air flies a total of approximately 160 aircraft of various types and currently has approximately 900 employees. At Wittmund DADS deploys (6) Douglas A-4N "Skyhawk" as target tugs for the German Luftwaffe. Their contract calls for 1200 flight hours per year. Providing "Visual Target" workout for the Euro Fighters. This has the advantage that costly flight hours with the Euro Fighter can be saved. The contract with the Canadians runs until 2019.

The registrations of the A-4N at Wittmund: C-FGZD 367, C-FGZE 495, C-FGZH 534, C-FGZI 531, C-FGZO 532, C-FGZS 337



The Canadian Douglas A-4N Skyhawks at Wittmund: C-FGZS and C-FGZE above, left bottom insert C-FGZD and C-FGZH right bottom insert C-FGZH.





Naval Station Norfolk, situated in south-eastern Virginia on the US East Coast is the world's biggest naval base. NS Norfolk is the homeport of five aircraft carriers (CVN-69 USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, CVN-72 USS Abraham Lincoln, CVN-73 USS George Washington, CVN-75 USS Harry S. Truman, CVN-77 USS George H.W. Bush) and about 130 fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, based at Chambers Field, formerly known as Naval Air Station Norfolk.

All East Coast E-2C/D Hawkeyes and C-2A Greyhounds are based at Chambers Field. These aircraft are being operated by five front-line Carrier Airborne Early Warning (VAW) squadrons with the E-2C/D and one Fleet Logistics Support (VRC) squadron with the C-2A Greyhound. As the only fleet replacement squadron in the Navy VAW-120 is flying both the E-2C/D and C-2A. Furthermore, each E-2D delivered from Northrop Grumman to the Navy first goes to VAW-120.

Helicopter Marine Countermeasures Squadron HM-12, HM-14 and HM-15 are the only ones to fly the MH-53E Sea Dragon minesweeping helicopter, whereas HM-12 serves as training unit for air and ground crew. Also based at Chambers Field are seven Helicopter Sea Combat (HSC) squadrons with the MH-60S Seahawk and HSC-84 with MH-60 and HH-60H Seahawk. HSC-84 is one of two special operations units in the US Navy. The MH-60S's primary missions are search and rescue, naval special warfare support and anti-surface warfare. The HH-60H is equipped with specialized gear and used for insertion and extraction of special forces as well as for combat search and rescue operations.

The Aviation Magazine would like to thank MC1 Ernest Scott and Mike Maus, PAO, Naval Air Force Atlantic NS Norfolk.



NS NORFOLK

Article and photography by Ralf Peter Walter



Grumman E-2C Hawkeye of the VAW-120



Grumman C-2A Greyhound of the VAW-120



C-2A



C-2A



E-2C



E-2C



E-2D



E-2D



Sikorsky MH-60S Seahawk of the HSC-26



Sikorsky MH-53E Sea Dragon of the HM-15





F/A-18C Hornets of the



NAS OCEANA

Article and photography by Ralf Peter Walter



T-34C Turbo Mentor of the SFWSL



Naval Air Station Oceana is located at Virginia Beach, Virginia. It is the master jet base of the US Navy on the east coast. NAS Oceana is one of the world's largest military air bases and is home to Strike Fighter Wing Atlantic with eighteen F/A-18 Hornet and Super Hornet squadrons.

Sixteen of these are Strike Fighter Squadrons that deploy aboard US aircraft carriers. Among them are two of the Navy's most famous squadrons. VFA-11 "Red Rippers" is the oldest continuously active fighter squadron. VFA-31 "Tomcatters" is the only Navy fighter squadron that achieved aerial victories in three wars: WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. They also performed the last official flight of an F-14 Tomcat on September 22, 2006.

The other two F-18 squadrons are permanently based at NAS Oceana. Fighter Squadron Composite 12 (VFC-12) "Fighting Omars" provides adversary training to East Coast wings and supports the Strike Fighter Advanced Readiness Program, which trains operational fleet F/A-18 squadrons. VFA-106 "Gladiators", with about 130 assigned Hornets and Super Hornets the largest squadron in the Navy, is the East Coast fleet replacement unit. Its mission is to train new F/A-18 pilots and weapons system officers in the basics of air-to-air and air-to-ground missions along with day and night carrier qualification. All in all more than 130 legacy Hornets (F/A-18A/B/C/D) and Super Hornets (F/A-18E/F) are based at NAS Oceana. These aircraft deploy as part of Oceana's five Carrier Air Wings (CVW) to CVN 65 USS Enterprise with CVW-1, to CVN 75 USS Harry S. Truman with CVW-3, to CVS 69 USS Dwight D. Eisenhower with CVW-7, to CVN 77 George H. W. Bush with CVW-8 and to CVN 70 USS Carl Vinson with CVW-17.

Other units at NAS Oceana are the Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 56 (VR-56) "Globemaster" flying the C-40A, the Navy version of the Boeing 737NG and the Strike Fighter Weapons School, Atlantic operating some Beechcraft T-34C Turbo Mentor.

The Aviation Magazine would like to thank Kelley Stirling, PAO, NAS Oceana.

F/A-18C Hornet of the



F/A-18E Super Hornet of the





F/A-18F Super Hornet of the VFA-32

F/A-18F Super Hornets of the



2016 RACE CALENDAR



* to be confirmed.

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Abu Dhabi (UAE)

Report by the Editor with photography as noted

Pete McLeod of Canada performs during the finals of the Red Bull Air Race World Championship in Abu Dhabi, on March 12, 2016.



Pete McLeod of Canada performs during the qualifying of the first stage of the Red Bull Air Race World Championship in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates on March 11, 2016



The first race of the 2016 Red Bull Air Race World Championship was even hotter than expected in sizzling Abu Dhabi on Saturday March 12, as Nicolas Ivanoff of France blazed through the pylons to victory in a close race.

Claiming the early lead in what's setting up to be an especially fierce title battle, Ivanoff's time of 58.550 was barely a tenth of a second faster than Matthias Dolderer of Germany in second place (58.660). François Le Vot of France, who is beginning only his second season and was ranked 14th, captured his first career podium with 1:02.281 for third place.

With the retirement of 2015 World Champion Paul Bonhomme, the 2016 title for the world's ultimate motorsport series in the sky is anyone's to seize, and the heat was on. The day was packed with shocks: Matt Hall of Australia, who was ranked number one after finishing second overall last year, hit a pylon and failed to advance beyond the opening round for only the third time in his career. Another top favorite, 2008 World Champion Hannes Arch, gave fans a similar surprise after flying brilliantly through the early rounds only to earn a Disqualification in the Final 4 for passing the Safety Line.

The season-opening victory makes Ivanoff the early leader in the points as the campaign for the World Championship begins across seven more races in six countries. "I propose we end the season right now," joked the Team Hamilton pilot. "Actually, we worked really hard for this in training and I was not stressed coming into the race – but I knew we had to be really careful. I'm very happy for my team and my fans."

Results Master Class Abu Dhabi: 1. Nicolas Ivanoff (FRA), 2. Matthias Dolderer (GER), 3. François Le Vot (FRA), 4. Hannes Arch (AUT), 5. Kirby Chambliss (USA), 6. Michael Goulian (USA), 7. Pete McLeod (CAN), 8. Yoshihide Muroya (JPN), 9. Matt Hall (AUS), 10. Juan Velarde (ESP), 11.

World Championship Standings: 1. Nicolas Ivanoff (FRA) 15 points, 2. Matthias Dolderer (GER) 12 pts, 3. François Le Vot (FRA) 9 pts, 4. Kirby Chambliss (USA) 6 pts, 5. Michael Goulian (USA) 5 pts, 6. Pete McLeod (CAN) 4 pts, 7. Yoshihide Muroya (JPN) 3 pts, 8. Matt Hall (AUS) 2 pts, 9. Juan Velarde (ESP) 1 pt, 10. Hannes Arch (AUT), 11. Nigel Lamb (GBR), 12. Peter Podlunšek (SLO), 13. Petr Kopfstein (CZE), 14. Martin Šonka (CZE)



Left to right: 2nd place Matthias Dolderer 1st place Nicolas Ivanoff and 3rd place François Le Vot

The race winner Nicolas Ivanoff of France performs during the finals of the first stage of the Red Bull Air Race World Championship in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates on March 12, 2016."

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Training in Sion by the Swiss Air Force

Report and photography by Peter Thivessen





Embedded between high mountains in southern Switzerland lies Sion airfield (Air Base 14) in the Rhone Valley. For three weeks during February and March the Wiederholungskurs (WK) "refresher course" of the Swiss Air Force took place with the Squadron 18 (F/A-18 Hornet) and Squadron 19 (F-5 Tiger).

In addition to the full time personnel, 630 militiamen (reserved forces) participated who are required to train for only a few weeks a year*. They are the decisive reinforcement for the endurance of the Swiss Air Force.

The preparations for a refresher course (WK) exercise include the installation of additional supplies and hardware from other sites to Sion in order to reinforce existing equipment. They affect virtually everything which must be present for the operation of an operational airfield reflecting the needs of the Swiss Air Force.

Unambiguous communication is the most particular challenge during this exercise. Switzerland is a multilingual country, they speak High German, the Swiss dialect "Schwiizer-Dütsch", French, Italian and Romansh. "Therefore, the teams must be linguistically fit, so they can avoid communication problems during decisive moments," according to the Air Base Commander, Colonel Pierre de Goumoens, General Staff.

In addition to the interaction of the ground crews, pilots partake in other training scenarios which they would not participate in during their normal daily training routines at their home bases. During the WK at Sion (8) F/A-18 Hornets and (4) F-5 Tigers participated with corresponding reserve personnel.

During the visit of "The Aviation Magazine" the QRA was flown with two F/A-18s. The call signs were Panther 1 and 2. As an alternate air base, Payerne has been set. Both aircraft were equipped with live weapons AIM-9X Sidewinder (Air Intercept Missile) and AIM-120C7 AMRAAM (Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile) plus integrated 20 mm Gatling cannon M61A1.

Squadron Commander of the Air Wing 14, Major Martin Hess, explained that his tactical area of responsibility are for the Squadron 18 (FI St 18) consisting of the Hornets, the Squadron 19 (FI St 19) consisting of the Tigers and the "Fliegerkompanie 14", the last two permanently stationed together in Sion, while AB Payerne is home base for the Hornets.

The FI St 18 is one of three squadrons of the Swiss Air Force equipped with the F/A-18 Hornet interceptors. They constitute the backbone of the Swiss Air Force, flying the Hornets since 1998. The inventory of the Air Force currently consists of (31) F/A-18 Hornets, distributed to the main bases: Payerne (FI St 17 & 18), and Meiringen in Bernese Oberland with the FI St 11.

The main task of the Swiss Air Force is the air patrol, also referred to as air policing. In short term, and in any weather condition unknown aircraft must be identified and, if necessary, can be intercepted.

In addition to the participating Hornet squadron in the WK, the participating squadron 19 with F-5 Tigers consist of reserved force pilots. All these pilots when not carrying out their military service are employed in various professions which do not necessarily have a connection to aviation. Currently there are (26) F-5 Tigers airworthy in the Swiss Air Force's inventory, split between (3) squadrons. During this year's refresher course the Tigers of Patrouille Suisse aerobatics team, with their famous red and white livery were used.

The Aviation Magazine Media would like to express our thanks to Mrs. Delphine Allemann of the Media and Communications Office, Bern, Switzerland. Our special thanks goes to the Air Base Commander Colonel Pierre De Goumoens, of the General Staff; Major Martin Hess, Commander of Fliegergeschwaders 14, of the General Staff ; Mr.Didier Sallin (Press Officer Air Base 14, Sion) and Mr. T. Nyfelder (Chief of ground crews Air Base 14, Sion) for their generous cooperation, great hospitality, friendliness and assistance on base.

* The wages for the reserved forces members are paid by their employers during their time in service (generally 80% of their normal pay with the difference reimbursed by the federal government).



- F/A-18 Hornets of Staffel 18 during the exercise at Sion AB, Switzerland, "009" top left top right with AIM-9X Sidewinder and "015" with AIM-9X Sidewinder and AIM-120C7 AM-RAMM bottom images.
- Major Martin Hess, Squadron Commander of the Air Wing 14, Staffel 18, on the right and his wingman "Slam" of the bottom left image.



WELL... HOW DID I GET HERE?

My Navy Air Facility El Centro Photo Call Experience

Article and photography by Steve Bigg

There is quite simply nothing else like it. The sights and sounds of military aviation are a privilege to experience up close. The chest rattling sensation that only comes from standing next to a runway while the engines of a Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet spool up into afterburner producing 44,000 lbs of thrust. The warmth of used jet fuel washing over you as T-45 Goshawk training aircraft pass by doing circuits of take offs and landings. The smell of burnt rubber as a C-2 Greyhound's tires go from zero to 130 mph the instant they touch the ground. These are just some of the completely unique experiences involved in photographing military aircraft operations while standing less than 50 feet from the edge of an active runway. And every single time I find myself in the privileged position of being on a military airfield shooting aircraft operations, lyrics from the Taking Heads "Once In A Lifetime" come to mind: "Well... How did I get here?"

When I consider the opportunities I've had that have resulted in the privilege of participating in a photo shoot of military aircraft next to an active runway on a military base, the Photo Call held at Naval Air Facility El Centro (NAFEC) in sunny Southern California on February 18th, 2016 was a unique first. My initial opportunity came when a friend in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) offered to escort me around 4 Wing Cold Lake for a couple days to shoot at the multinational Maple Flag exercise being held in June of 2010. By the time I left Cold Lake I felt like I had had a once in a lifetime unforgettable experience and if I never had the chance to do it again I'd be happy. As time passed the euphoria of my first shoot began to wear off and I realised it had only taken one hit to get me addicted. I needed a fix and started looking for other opportunities. Over time I realised I couldn't rely on friendship and air shows alone to feed my new found addiction and I made the leap to submitting story requests to magazines like The Aviation Magazine in the hope of gaining access to shoot and tell the stories of military aviation. It seemed like a Hail Mary pass as I had no press credentials but to my surprise I was successful at getting my images and stories published first in The Magazine by Air Shows Review online magazine and later in print publications. The NAFEC opportunity however didn't involve a letter of intent to publish to gain access to a shoot, it came up in a different way: through my membership in ISAP.

I've been a member of the International Society of Aviation Photographers (ISAP) for three years and have seen several opportunities to apply to join a group of ISAP members on various Photo Calls. I had submitted

requests for some but the NAFEC event was the first time I'd been contacted to discuss my participation. After a frank conversation with ISAP President Larry Grace about my involvement with ISAP (or more honestly, my lack of involvement) it was agreed that if I would get my member portfolio completed for the website and provide a "Meet The Member" article for ISnAP in a timely fashion, I could join the group at NAFEC. I felt both tasks were little to ask of a member and the conversation gave me the push to do what I'd put off and get them done. The conversation made me realise that being a member of ISAP wasn't meant to be a passive experience. Getting involved and contributing was the way to get the most out of being a member and my latest fix in El Centro was proof.

A patch was made for the February Photo Call at NAFEC and it included the phrase "Closer than you ought to be?". Looking up and down the bright white "NO GO" line painted on the ground parallel to the edge of Runway 26, it was a question that seemed worthy of some thought. We'd been very clearly instructed by the NAFEC Public Affairs Officer (PAO) not to cross the white line unless we were interested in an immediate, personally escorted, trip off of the base property with a bonus invitation not to come back. Looking at how close the line was to the edge of the active runway I did wonder if any of the roughly 50 photographers participating in the photo call would actually want to get closer. As much as I love being next to fighter jets as they fly touch and go's, there's a limit to how close I'd like to get and I think the white line at El Centro was it. Walking up and down the line and trying shots from different positions, including backing away from the line, gave a nearly unlimited number of different angles to shoot from. The ISAP group shared the line with other clubs, groups and individuals and everyone seemed to play well in the sandbox together respecting each other's chance to shoot.

Besides everyone's good nature and professionalism the success of the day can be largely attributed to the way the shoot was organized and run by the PAO and his staff. The initial briefing given to the group before heading out onto the field covered the ground rules clearly and the rules were more than reasonable. They struck a perfect balance between everyone's opportunity to "get the shot" while still achieving the number one goal for the day: the safety of both the photographers and the people and aircraft we were there to shoot.

When the horn blew to indicate the day was over and it was time to pack up, the sun was casting a warm orange glow on the airfield. I looked forward to meeting with the ISAP group that evening to discuss the day together. I was eager to start reviewing my shots for my catch of the day when the power of my addiction surfaced again. It left me wondering when I would find myself on a base next with camera in hand. I didn't know the answer yet but I knew I would certainly be pleased if the next opportunity to shoot would be with ISAP again.





- C-2 Greyhound, main image
- EA-18G Growler, left inset
- Photocall patch, mid right
- Being this close to an F-18G taking off, bottom right.





- Blue Angels (1) F/A-18D (first aircraft) and (3) F/A-18C main image
- T-45C Goshawks from VT-7 "Eagles" from NAS Meridian, left inset

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El Centro Airshow

Report and photography by Geoffrey Arnwine

Imperial "Blue Angels" Stormtroopers





2016 is a big year because it commemorates the 70th Anniversary the Navy's world famous flight demonstration squadron.

The gates opened at 9:00 am and there were many ground activities offered for all ages before the flying events took place. Many of the static aircraft included a couple modern fighters like the F/A-18 Super Hornet, A-10 Thunderbolt II, and AV-8B Harrier II. There were also a ton of helicopters for people to come up close to including the AH-1Z Viper and the many variants of the MH-60. Planes of Fame and the Commemorative Air Force were kind enough to let the show offer a vast array of static warbirds ranging from the P-51 Mustang to B-25 Mitchell. One ground attraction that you don't normally see at an air show is the 501st Legion based out of San Diego which brings many people dressed as Star Wars characters to the event for the enjoyment of the attendees. Many of the characters included a majority of Imperial Stormtroopers, Mandalorians dressed in Blue Angels colors, the feared bounty hunter Boba Fett, and the newest villain in the galaxy Kylo Ren.

Flying began at 11:00 am with the Opening Ceremonies and National Anthem. Jumping for the Anthem were the United States Navy Leap Frogs parachute team. During their jump the crowd got to get a rare pass by their jump plane, a Grumman C-2 Greyhound. Following the Leap Frogs jump, the show offered many great demonstrations by WWII warbirds courtesy of the CAF SoCal Wing including a dogfight between the North American P-51 Mustang and Mitsubishi A6M Zero along with a Blue Angels tribute flight with the Grumman F6F Hellcat and F8F Bearcat. Along with the CAF, other warbird highlights included John Collver who performed in his North American SNJ Texan known as the "War Dog." The Red Eagles Formation Team also performed with incredible maneuvers in their Yak-52 trainers. The show also featured some of the top

aerobatic performers in the air show industry including Vicky Benzing in her Extra 300S and Spencer Suderman in his Meteor Pitts. During intermissions, the crowd had the opportunity to watch the Metal Mullisha dirt bike group perform stunts in the static display area. As the show came closer to the headlining act, the Blue Angels, Planes of Fame offered a rare dogfight demonstration with the North American F-86 Sabre and Mikoyan Gurevich MiG-15 Fagot. Originally, tactical demonstrations with the U.S. Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet VFA-122 Team and Turkish Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon SOLOTURK were scheduled to perform. However, due to logistics, neither of them were able to perform at the show. But that didn't keep the audience from enjoying the start to the Blue Angels air show season.

The Blue Angels demonstration officially kicked off at 2:30 pm with Fat Albert performing its demonstration with the Lockheed Martin TC-130 Hercules. After Fat Albert landed, the Blue Angels flight team officers were introduced and rolled out their blue Boeing F/A-18 Hornets for takeoff. This was the team's first public demonstration of the 2016 season which commemorates their 70th anniversary.

The crowd was pleased at the numerous maneuvers each pilot performed and each jet looked shiny clean to impress air show attendees during their very special air show season. After the show was completed, the Blue Angels pilots walked over to the crowd line to sign autographs for fans.

Despite cancellations of the Turkish F-16 and VFA-122 F/A-18, the show ended in a high note with plenty of ground attractions and warbird demonstrations. Returning to the show to announce was no other than Mr. John Huggins who put on yet another remarkable job at explaining the most important information about show routines with respect to letting the aircraft speak for themselves in the air. Thanks to the many volunteers, staff, and service men on the base, NAF El Centro put on another successful air show.



To begin their show season as always, the United States Navy Blue Angels performed at their Winter Home at Naval Air Facility El Centro, CA in front of the large crowd in Imperial Valley. After months of extensive training, the team was able to showcase their elite precision under the command of the new flight leader, Commander Ryan Bernacchi.



- F6F Hellcat and F8F Bearcat Blue Angels Tribute, top image
- P-51 Mustang and A6M Zero Dog-fight, bottom image



- F-86 Sabre and MiG-15 Fagot Dog-fight top image
- John Collver in his SNJ Texan "War Dog" bottom image



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Thunder & Lightning over Arizona

Report by Norman A Graf with photography as noted



Joe “Rifle” Shetterly RV-8 Aerobatics,
former A-10 West Team pilot

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“Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future” has been the recurring theme for the biennial “Thunder & Lightning over Arizona” Open House and Air Show at Davis-Monthan AFB. The two-day event’s aerial performances included warbirds, aerobatic aircraft, helicopter displays, a combat search and rescue demonstration, military tactical demos and culminated with the Thunderbirds. The ramp was filled with an equally broad and disparate selection of military aircraft on static display and the weather was perfect. All the ingredients for a terrific air show to start off the 2016 season!

The gates opened promptly at 0900. Access to the base was handled very well, with parking close-in to the tarmac and security checks that were quick and efficient. Just inside the gate, visitors were greeted by a long line of US Air Force “heavies” : C-17 Globemaster III, KC-135R Stratotanker, KC-10 Extender, E-3 Sentry, TC-135W Rivet Joint, EC-130H Compass Call, B-1B Lancer, and C-5A Galaxy, almost all of which were open for tours. Most of the remaining aircraft on static display were housed under shade ramadas at show left. These included current military such as F-35A Lightning II, F-16C Fighting Falcon, F-15E Strike Eagle, A-10C Thunderbolt II, F/A-18F Super Hornet, MC-12W Liberty, T-1A Jayhawk, T-38 Talon and two Army helicopters, the AH-64 Apache and UH-72 Lakota. A few famous retired military aircraft, such as the F-4 Phantom II, were towed over from the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group (AMARG) “boneyard.” It appears that the restrictions placed on military air show participation imposed by the ongoing budget sequestration process are slowly being eased.

The flightline is very long and, except for some reserved areas such as the Flightline Club, Beer Garden and VIP pavilions, open for spectators. Unlike most air shows, folding chairs were not allowed through the gates, but rental chairs were available for a \$5 fee.

Some small bleachers were available free of charge, and shade was available either under the wings of the larger aircraft on display or under the protective ramadas for the smaller aircraft. A large “Kid’s Zone” featured multiple bounce houses, plenty of portable toilets were distributed throughout the area, and free water was also available from military “Water Buffaloes.” Lots of souvenir and food vendors were distributed throughout the grounds.

The show started promptly at 1100 with a jumper from the USAF Academy’s Wings of Blue parachute team flying in the American flag. Several more members of the Wings of Blue then parachuted in, each bringing in a different service flag. They would perform once more later in the day, demonstrating their aerial skills with high speed maneuvers in freefall as well as precision canopy flight. The flying started with Jacquie Warda putting on a fabulous aerobatic performance in her beautifully painted Extra 300. Even though this was her first air show of the season her maneuvers were all spot-on, especially the perfect slow roll down the length of the aerobatic box. Kent Pietsch put on the first of his three performances of the day, impersonating a complete novice invading the air space with his zany flying. He later landed on a pickup truck and demonstrated his complete mastery of energy management by killing the engine at 6,000 feet then bringing the aircraft to a stop on the runway with the spinner touching the outstretched hand of the airshow announcer. Other civilian acts included the Desert Rats Formation Team which performed a series of tight flybys in their four Nanchang CJ-6s. Joe “Rifle” Shetterly, formerly the A-10 West Demonstration Team pilot, put on an outstanding aerobatic display in his highly-polished RV-8, concluding with a race against Bill Braack in the Smoke-N-Thunder Jet Car.

This show was one of only four where the Marine Corps’ AV-8B was scheduled to perform this year. Major “Squeeze” Pasquale of VMA-311 “Tomcats” from MCAS Yuma put on a terrific show, powerfully demonstrating the broad range of the Harrier II’s aerial capabilities. Although the Harrier II entered service with the USMC over 30 years ago and is currently scheduled to be replaced by the F-35B Lightning II, it is still an extremely capable aircraft, able to take off and land vertically, hover like a helicopter, or fly at speeds approaching the speed of sound.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s Office of Air and Marine (OAM) is the world’s largest aviation and marine law enforcement organization with 83 locations throughout the U.S. Davis-Monthan is home to the largest air operations program within the OAM and is responsible for almost 20 percent of the OAM’s total flight hours. The Customs and Border Patrol vehicle interdiction simulation demonstrated how a suspected smuggler would be apprehended. An agile Eurocopter AS 350 intercepted a speeding automobile at almost ground level, after which a UH-60 Blackhawk arrived on the scene. Officers fast-roped down to apprehend the suspect and turn him over to police officers who had been in fast pursuit in their squad cars.

Among its other responsibilities, Davis-Monthan is host to the 563d Rescue Group which is composed of the 48th Rescue Squadron (Pararescue), 55th Rescue Squadron (HH-60G Pavehawk) and 79th (HC-130J Combat King II) Rescue Squadron. Elements of these squadrons combined with four A-10s from the 355th Fighter Wing to put on an impressive display of combat and airpower capabilities with a simulated Combat Search and Rescue mission. Two parachutists jumped from a circling HC-130J Combat King II from the 79th RQS, playing the part of downed airmen. Four A-10s from the 357th Fighter Squadron were scrambled, with the Thunderbolt IIs taking off in section flights. An EC-130H Compass Call from the 41st Electronic

Combat Squadron took off to disrupt enemy command and control communications. Two HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters from the 55th Rescue Squadron carrying pararescuemen from the 48th RQS took off and joined up with the Combat King II and simulated an in-flight refueling. The four A-10s performed a number of strafing and bombing runs accompanied by pyrotechnics on the ground. With the area now secured, the two Pave Hawks flew in low and fast, flared to a stop and hovered as the rescue team fast-roped to the ground. The airmen were quickly hoisted to the hovering HH-60G, the rescue team was recovered and the Pave Hawks quickly departed the scene. A pass-in-review by the participating aircraft of the Desert Lightning Team ended the display.

One of the most sought-after tactical demonstrations at an air show is the F-22 Raptor so it was a special treat that the team debuted its 2016 season at Davis-Monthan. New to the team this year is Maj Daniel “FFits” Dickinson, who masterfully demonstrated the awesome capabilities of this premiere fifth-generation air superiority fighter jet. The Raptor that he flew starred in the Transformers movie as the Decepticon Starscream. He completed his flight demonstration by joining up with Major General Tommy Williams, flying in the P-51D Mustang “Double Trouble two” for the Heritage Flight.

Then it was time for the headline act, the USAF Thunderbirds, to begin their aerial demonstration. On Saturday a brief swearing-in ceremony involving several dozen young volunteers preceded the flying. Astute observers had noticed that only five Fighting Falcons were lined up on the tarmac. Thunderbird #5, Capt. Nicholas Eberling, had suffered an injury which prevented him from performing in his role as Lead Solo. Nevertheless, the remaining Thunderbirds put on a very impressive five-ship demonstration featuring the rarely-seen Stinger formation. After the show and following a short debrief the team members came to the flightline to sign autographs and answer questions from the audience.

Air Boss Ralph Royce kept the flying action flowing smoothly and safely and Announcer Rob Reider kept the audience of 150,000 informed and entertained. We would like to express our thanks and sincere appreciation to the 355th Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office for their outstanding hospitality and assistance during the Open House, in particular Capt Casey Osborne, 2d Lt Sydney Smith and TSgt Courtney Richardson. Additionally we would like to thank the show organizers, sponsors, participants and all the airmen at Davis-Monthan AFB for making this show such a success.



- Customs and Border Patrol UH-60A Blackhawk, left bottom
- Heritage Flight of the F-22 and P-51D, right top
- HC-130J Combat King II refuel demo with HH-60G Pave Hawks right bottom





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USAF Wings of Blue Parachute Demonstration Team top far left, USAF Thunderbirds F-16C top mid left, Jacquie B Airshows Extra 300 Aerobatics top right and the AZ ANG KC-135R Stratotanker with the 150th years tail marking, main image bottom.



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The Thunderbirds closed off the air show at D-M AFB for 2016



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Los Angeles County Air Show

Report by Norman A. Graf, photography as noted



The third annual Los Angeles County Air Show took place March 19-20 at General William J. Fox Airfield in Lancaster, California. The weekend's 75th anniversary tribute to Pearl Harbor kicked off with a Friday night meet-and-greet featuring a softball game between the U.S. Navy Blue Angels and the U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School at nearby Edwards AFB, hula dancing, a luau show and period warbird flyover. The two-day show featured world-class aerobatics, parachute demonstrations, wing-walking, warbird fly-bys, USAF and NASA jet fly-bys, the Tora! Tora! Tora! recreation of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, and ended with the Navy's Blue Angels.

The gates opened promptly at 9AM, flying began around noon and continued until the Blue Angels touched down shortly after 4PM. The Patriot Parachute Team brought in the US Flag, circled on their downline by Skip Stewart and Melissa Pemberton. Reflecting their Navy SEAL background, the two jumpers stretched the flag between them as they hurtled at breakneck speed directly towards the ground, separating at what seemed the last possible moment. The team returned later in the day with even more amazing feats.

Skip Stewart was the recipient of the 2015 Art Scholl Memorial Showmanship Award presented by the International Council of Airshows. His jaw-dropping maneuvers in the highly-modified Pitts S-2 biplane, named "Prometheus," left no doubts that the award was well-earned. Melissa Pemberton performed a number of times during the day. She flew circles around her husband Rex as he demonstrated the exceptional flying capabilities of modern wingsuits, breaking off only as he deployed his parachute. Her solo aerobatic demonstration in the Edge 540 showed off the skills which have earned her a spot on the US National Aerobatics team. Her sequence ended with a double-ribbon cut with both ribbons strung from the same set of poles. She first flew low to the ground, cutting the lower of the two, then circled around to cut the other ribbon, flying inverted. Chuck Coleman, flying the Extra 300 put on a similar high-powered demonstration of competition-level maneuvers. Melissa and Skip then joined up with Chris Darnell in the Shockwave Jet Truck for the Tinstix show, featuring lots of low-level flying, afterburner flames from the truck and pyro explosions in the background ending with a race between the flying pair of aircraft and the speeding truck on the ground.

The Planes of Fame Museum in Chino once again brought quite a number of warbirds to the show. Three of their World War II fighters passed by in formation, then performed individual passes. It was terrific to see and hear the P-38 Lightning, P-40 Warhawk, and F-86 Sabrejet in the

clear blue skies over Lancaster. The N9MB Flying Wing also put on a very nice aerobatic display.

The Texas Flying Legends Museum brought quite a few of its warbirds to the show: FM-2 Wildcat, TBM-3 Avenger, P-40K Warhawk "Aleutian Tiger," B-25J Mitchell "Betty's Dream," P-51D Mustang "Dakota Kid II" and Spitfire MkIX "Half Stork." Unfortunately, their A6M2 Zero and FG-1D Corsair were involved in a taxiing accident during a refueling stop on the flight out. The six warbirds made several formation passes before performing individually, finishing with beautiful banana passes to expose their topsides.

Unlike last year's show, which featured both the Marines' AV-8B Harrier II and the Navy's F-18E Super Hornet, this year's show was devoid of modern military tactical demonstrations. However, there were two surprise additions to the lineup: the appearance on Saturday of an F-16D Fighting Falcon from nearby Edwards AFB, which flew in from behind the crowd, then departed in an afterburning climb back to base, and Sunday's single pass by a B-52 Stratofortress. NASA's ER-2 (the civilian version of a plane designed to fly in the rarefied atmosphere at high-speed low-level pass in front of the crowd to demonstrate its capabilities.)

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. No one recreates this event better than the Commemorative Air Force's Tora! Tora! Tora! re-enactment team. Flying the aircraft originally modified for the 1970 movie, they put on an incredibly well-choreographed aerial ballet interwoven with extensive pyrotechnic displays on the ground. The smoke from the explosions and resulting grass fires often conceal the aircraft, adding to the realism, but making photography challenging.





That and the fact that aircraft are coming from left and right, high up and down on the deck, all at the same time. It's an incredible display and one not to be missed, especially this year.

The Blue Angels, in only the second show of their season, put on an amazing show. Starting with Fat Albert's demonstration of the flight capabilities of the massive C-130 Hercules to the incredibly precise formation flying of the F/A-18 Hornets, it is non-stop action. Some of the solo passes, especially the high-speed crossing maneuvers, seemed a bit off, though. This may have been due to mechanical issues, as Blue Angel #6 landed during the performance. Captain Jeff Kuss quickly climbed into the spare jet and rejoined the team for the remainder of the show. Being some of the oldest Hornets in the fleet, the Blue Angels jets have been experiencing a growing number of mechanical difficulties in the past few years. It's hard to believe that the Blue Angels have been flying the F/A-18 Hornet for almost half of their 70 years in existence. The Navy recently issued a contract to Boeing to

study the design modifications necessary to convert the Super Hornet for Blue Angels duty. It will be interesting to see where that leads.

In addition to a large variety of food, beverage and air show vendors, there were quite a few educational and outreach displays. The 15,000 square foot STEM Expo featured numerous activities and displays of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math in the Antelope Valley. Many K-12 schools and local colleges were also present with exhibits and interactive demonstrations that engaged the visitors. New this year were the STEM Expo Forums featuring speakers from Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Scaled Composites and NASA. Dennis Dunbar, executive director of the Los Angeles County Air Show said "The Air Show team and our dedicated volunteers, community partners and sponsors have worked tirelessly to bring the Aerospace Valley the best of aviation while inspiring the next generation with science, technology, engineering and math with an Expo that will mesmerize and entice kids of all ages."

The non-flying static display featured a pair of F/A-18E Super Hornets from nearby NAS Lemoor and a T-34 Turbomenter and F/A-18 Hornet from NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center.

This air show is very nice from a photographer's perspective. First off, the showline faces north, so the sun is at your back and the weather is generally dependable. Secondly, the organizers provide the opportunity to purchase a limited number of Photo Tour Passes. This provides early morning access, preferred parking, lunch, and a designated "photo pit" for photographers. And last, but not least, is the proximity to the show box and the broad gamut of top performers.

"In three short years, the Air Show continues to make a positive economic and community impact," said Allen Hoffman, board president of the Los Angeles County Air Show. "We look forward to growing this wonderful event while striving to make a difference in the region and the lives of our youth with the scholarship program and more." In only its third year, the show attracted a record crowd of 137,000 spectators over the two-day event at Fox Airfield.

Proceeds from the event will fund several scholarships to regional youth and provide seed money for the 2017 Air Show.

Air show announcers Ric Peterson and Rob Reider both did a great job of narrating and Air Boss Ralph Royce scheduled the non-stop action. Congratulations and thanks to the organizers, sponsors and volunteers for making this show such a success. We would like to thank PR Director Karen Strong and her team for the media arrangements and support. The Thunderbirds will be headlining the show next year, and we'll be back to cover another terrific air show in Aerospace Valley!

- ER-2 (the civilian version of the U-2) main image
- Ric Peterson (left) Ralph Royce (middle) and Rob Reider (right)





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TORA! TORA! TORA!

A6M Zero Replicas built for the movie, left top and bottom



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P-40N Warhawk main image and the P-40K Warhawk "Aleutian Tiger" right below



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- Melissa Pemberton and Skip Stewart cross each other, top
- Skip Stewart's Pitts S-2 biplane, named "Prometheus" bottom

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- F-16D Fighting Falcon from Edwards AFB, top
- The Blue Angels inset and Fat Albert, below



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AIRPORT SPOTTING

Images and locations as noted



Volotea Airlines Boeing 717-2BL, top; Private registration Bombardier CL-600-2B16 Challenger 604, bottom. Both at Malta International Airport—MLA, by Ray Biagio Pace.



El Al Boeing 737-900, top; Enter Air Boeing 737-800, middle, both at Tel Aviv, Ben Gurion Airport, Israel—TLV; Icelandair Boeing 757-200, at Seattle-Tacoma Airport—SEA, bottom. All by Moni Shafir.





Air Canada Jazz Express Bombardier Dash 8-300, at Toronto's Pearson International Airport—YYZ top left; US Airways Boeing 757-200 taking off and several KC-135R of Arizona ANG (background) at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport—PHX top right, images by the Editor; Aeroflot Boeing 777-3M0(ER) at Tel Aviv, Ben Gurion Airport, Israel—TLV, main image by Moni Shafir.





China Southern Boeing 787-8, at San Francisco International Airport—SFO top left; Scandinavian Airlines Airbus A340 above the Korean Air Lines Boeing 747-8B5 taxiing at San Francisco International Airport—SFO main image; Delta Boeing 717-2BD and Continental Boeing 737 above Air China Boeing 747-89L at San Francisco International Airport—SFO, top right. All images by Norman A. Graf.



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Escadron de Chasse 2/4 La Fayette in 2016 celebrates its 100 anniversary. From the beginning of World War I "the war that will end all wars" in Europe many Americans travelled to Europe and offered their volunteer services to Britain and France in the war against the German and Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy.

Prior to WWI, the French invented manned flight with hot air and hydrogen balloons. They invented sea-planes in 1905. The French aviator Roland Garros, invented the fighter aircraft after he joined Service Aéronautique at the beginning of the war. He and aircraft designer Raymond Saulnier collaborated in his idea that a forward firing machine gun attached to the aircraft could be used as a weapon to bring down an aircraft. And, it was Garros who achieved the first successful victory by an aircraft with a fixed forward firing machine gun. Thus the fighter aircraft was born.

Garros succeeded in shooting down several German aircraft, but one day his airplane developed a mechanical failure and this forced him to land behind the German lines. While he tried to destroy his Morane-Saulnier Type L after landing, the Germans recovered enough of the wreckage to evaluate the design and get their own fighter designed by the Dutch Anthony Fokker, thus the first mass produced fighter mono-plane the Fokker Eindecker was born.

On 18th of April, 1916, squadron No.124 was established by the French Air Service. Many American volunteers chose to enlist with the French Air Service and as direct result of this the French government sanctioned an American Squadron on 4th November 1916, Escadrille des Volontaires was born. On 6th of December 1916 it was renamed Escadrille La Fayette No.124, after Marquis de La Fayette, who went to America to fight against the British and served as a major general alongside George Washington, in the American Revolutionary War.

Initially commanded by the Frenchman Capt. Georges Thenault, No.124 comprised seven American pilots: Victor Chapman, Elliot Cowdin, Bert Hall, James McConnell, Norman Prince, Kiffin Rockwell and William Thaw. Its inaugural flight mission took place on 13 May 1916 and the Escadrille's first aerial 'kill' occurred five days later, when Kiffin Rockwell claimed victory over a German two-seater L.V.G., in October 1916. A Seminole Indian head was chosen by Capt. Thenault, changed to a Sioux sometime later, as the symbol for Escadrille Lafayette No.124. As their fame grew worldwide an increasing number of American volunteers sought service with No.124. Although not all the applicants became members of the No.124, many of them nevertheless passed through the Lafayette Flying Corps. About 200 Americans eventually passed through the French Air Service's training program.

After America's formal entry into the war the Escadrille passed into American hands in February 1918.

The history of the La Fayette Escadrille did not end when the squadron was incorporated into the American Air Service. From 1920 to 1939, The French Ministère de l' Air (Air Ministry) assigned the title Lafayette Escadrille in recognition of the American flyers, and to carry on the tradition, among them:

- In 1920 7th Squadron of the 35th Aero Regiment, and its planes carried the Sioux head insignia.
- In 1933, the Sioux Squadron was joined with the other elite group, Cigognes (the Storks) to form the



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95th Anniversary scheme

100th Anniversary scheme

Groupe de Chasse 2/5, the Escadron La Fayette. This unit flew the Dewoitine 500, at various bases throughout France during the 1930's and was stationed at Toul-Croix-de-Metz when the Second World War broke out in September 1939.

At the beginning of WWII, the La Fayette unit was re-formed in North Africa where it flew with the Free French Air Force. Initially outfitted with Curtiss "Hawks" they were soon upgraded with the superior P-40F "Warhawks." Over the course of the War, the Groupe 2/5 flew in the North African, Italian, French and German theatres. In April 1944, the P-47D became the unit's aircraft which it flew until 1949. In January 1945, the Group 2/5 returned to the Luxeuil Air Base, the field from which the first La Fayette Escadrille had flown in 1916. During WWII, Escadron Lafayette flew 8,531 sorties, 1,452 missions and was credited with 103 victories.

In July 1947, the Groupe 2/5 was reorganized as the Groupe de Chasse 2/4 La Fayette. In the following years, the unit saw combat action in Indochina flying Spitfire Mk IX's in 1947-1948, and later in Algeria, flying North American T-6G's.

In 1949 The Escadron La Fayette entered the jet age with the DeHavilland DH100 "Vampire" in 1949 then in 1953 the French built Ouragan. From 1954 they began flying the Republic F-84F "Thunderjet" which they flew until 1966 when it was replaced by the Dassault-Breguet "Mirage III". In July 1989, the "Mirage 2000N" armed with ASMP-A nuclear cruise missile, began service with the Groupe 2/4. The unit has been a part of the French Strategic Air Command and was designated as a Tactical Nuclear Strike Unit. Initially the La Fayette Group, consisted of three Escadrille: Escadrille No. 124 Sioux, Escadrille SPA 167 Cigognes, "The Storks" (wings up) and Escadrille SPA160, les Diabls Rouge, "The Red Devils."

La Fayette squadron was moved from Base aérienne 116 Luxeuil Saint-Sauveur to Istres, in September 2011 and merged with the Escadron de Chasse 2/4 Limosin, thus 2/4 remaining the only Mirage 2000N operating squadron.

Over the years, to commemorate anniversary milestones such as 50th, 75th, 95th and now the 100th years several interesting paint schemes emerged. The 100th anniversary is specially striking when compared to the 95th's.





The pilots and the 100th Anniversary paint scheme of the Lafayette Squadron on the Ramex Delta Mirage 2000N.





Celebrating the 100th Anniversary, Ramex Delta Mirage 2000N (front) Mirage 2000N (mid) and Rafale B (rear)



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