

THE AVIATION MAGAZINE

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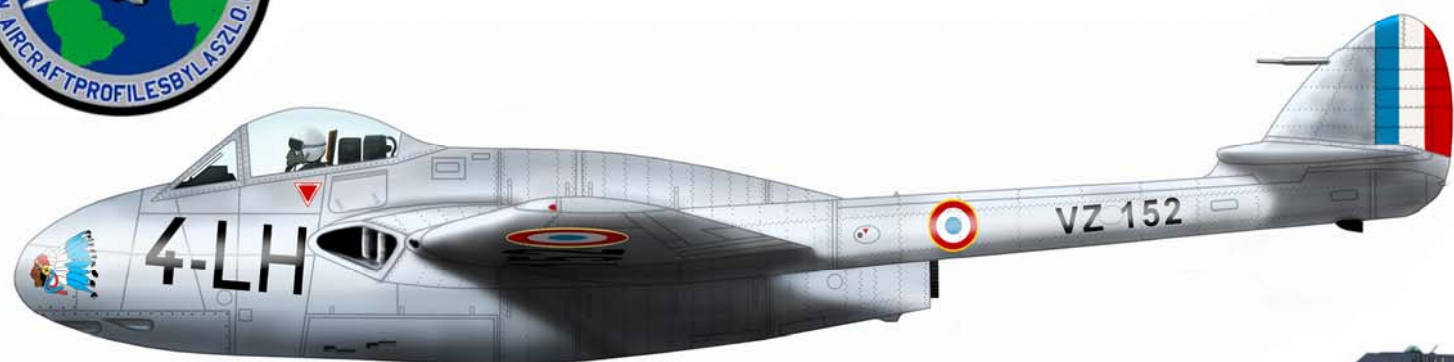


- ✈ Malta International Airshow
- ✈ London International Airshow, Canada
- ✈ NATO DAYS 2017, Ostrava, Czech Republic
- ✈ Blue Flag 2017, Israel
- ✈ Aviation Roundup, Minden, NV, USA
- ✈ And so much more...

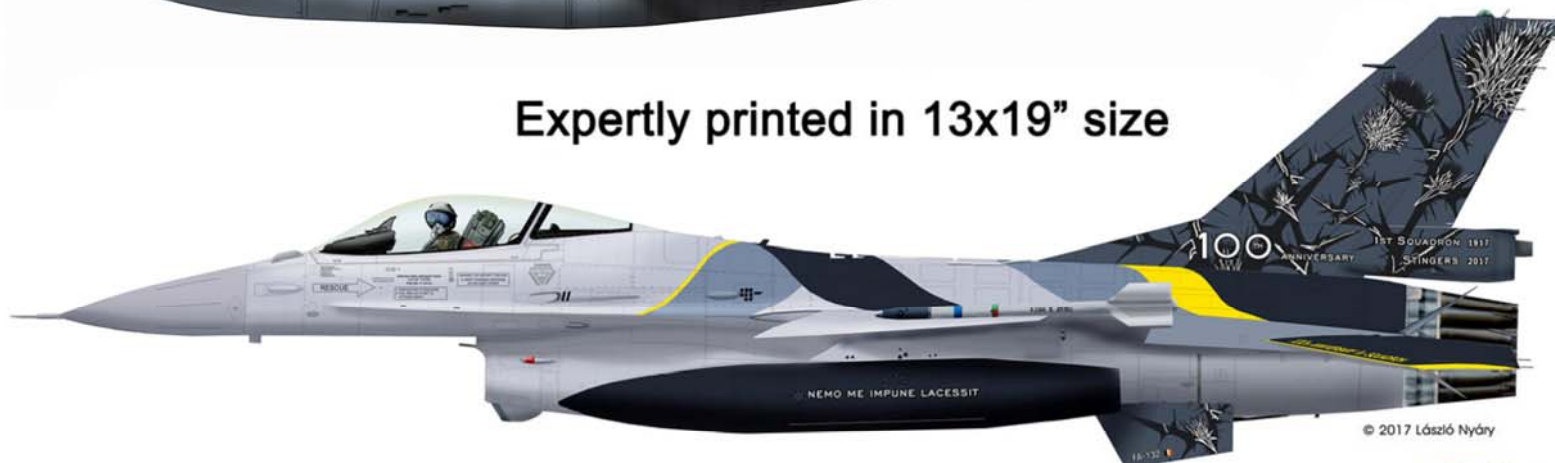




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Cover: RCAF CC-115 Buffalo at the London International Air Show, by Laszlo Nyary

Index page: Slovak AF MiG 29 at Ostrava by Wolfgang Jarisch



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Hungarian Aérospatiale AS 350B "Ecureuil"

Wolfgang Jarisch

The NATO Days & Czech Air Force Days in Ostrava are a yearly held event at Leoš Janáček Airport in Ostrava. They showed a wide range of police and rescue technologies, dynamic shows of special units and heavy military power, in the air and on the ground. It also included (combat?) techniques of soldiers, fire fighters and police officers, custom officers, prison officers and elite units from the Security and Defence industry. As a unique event in Europe it shows NATO-power combined with national and local special units. It is the biggest show of safety and security in Central Europe.

This year's special guest nation was Slovakia which brought a lot of military equipment to Ostrava. One of the highlights was the first appearance outside Slovakia of the brand new Sikorsky UH-60M Black Hawk, which is going to replace the Mil Mi-17 in the near future.

A Mil Mi-17 from the Slovak Air Force was also part in the static display. It was the last opportunity to see the last airworthy Tupolev Tu-154M in Europe, operated by the Slovak Government Flying Service. The classic aircraft made a last fly pass together with the replacement, the Airbus 319-ACE (the Tu-154M was ferried to Kosice on September 27, where it will be displayed in the Aviation Museum). Both aircraft did a touch and go before the Tu-154M made its last high speed fly pass forever. The Slovak Government Flying Service brought two other rarities to the NATO Days 2017, one Fokker 100 and one Mil Mi-171, which were exhibited in the static display.

The newest display teams for this year's edition were the French Air Force tactical demo team "Couteau Delta" with two Mirage 2000D aircraft from 2/3 Champagne BA133 Nancy-Ochey.

The other display team on site was the Royal Saudi Air Force display team "Saudi Hawks. The team was formed in 1998 as No 88 Squadron at King Abdulaziz Air Base (Dhahran), and is equipped with BAe Hawks Mk65 and Mk65A.



- MiG-15UTI above from the Warsaw Pact era
 - Jak-40 of the Czech Air Force, below
- Both images by Wolfgang Jarisch

Both display teams and the other solo displays did their rehearsals on Thursday and on Friday before the official show days. But the weather conditions changed at the weekend. On Saturday rain came early and so only some displays could be flown, but when “Couteau Delta” took off, one aircraft had a technical failure immediately after the start, so the display had to be cancelled. Due to the bad weather conditions the Royal Saudi Hawks were also cancelled. On Sunday the display director, Colonel Jaroslav Míka decided to cancel all flying displays due to the unfavourable flying conditions.

Despite the bad the weather conditions 65 0000 people paid a visit to the NATO Days & Czech Air Force Days in Ostrava. See you on a sunny weekend in September 2018.

The Aviation Magazine Media would like to express our thanks to the head of the press Center, Ms Andrea Čěřovská for their great hospitality and assistance.





- Mirage 2000D, Couteau Delta, French Air Force , above
- Fokker 100, Slovak Government , below.





- Hawk MK65A, Saudi Hawks Jet Team, Royal Saudi Air Force left top
- L-159 ALCA, Czech Air Force left bottom
- (2) JAS-39C Gripen, Czech Air Force, right top
- Mi-17, Slovak Air Force with digital camouflage, right bottom



- The Aviation Magazine would like to express our most sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Capt. Gabriele Orlandi, who lost his life on 24 September 2017 in a fatal accident with the Eurofighter Typhoon at the Terracina Airshow in Italy. In Ostrava the spectators saw one of the last spectacular and powerful displays from Capt. Orlandi in his Typhoon. He will be sadly missed, left top
- Tornado, German Air Force, left bottom
- Mi-17, Czech Air Force , right top
- E-7T Peace Eagle, Turkish Air Force , right bottom

All images on these pages are by Peter Thivessen



The AIRSHOW LONDON (ASL) was a success and it was by far the largest air show in Canada, which was an achievement. The event consisted of three days Friday's Hour of Power a limited display in the evening, and full shows on Saturday and Sunday.

Our reviewer attended Friday's Media Day, as well as Friday's Hour of Power, and Saturday's full day displays. It was refreshing that there were very few civilian performers apart from Pete McLeod, a local favourite who also participates in the Red Bull Air Races, Randy Ball with his MiG-17PF and Jerry Conley's Vampire.

The weather was very hot all through out the weekend, about 35C+ and even hotter on the tarmac. This created a lot of heat haze, it was wise to seek some kind of shelter of a tent, and to drink plenty of water. The Media Day was a let down for most of the media, including from Europe, with improper facilities until about noon, when a media tent was erected, not exactly at a good location either, behind the "Photo Pit" for photographers who paid up to \$75 per person per day to shoot their images. The media was told to go into the "Photo Pit" by the person in charge of the media while the tent for the media is be erected, the person a real ignorant and arrogant to say the least who ran the Photo Pit kicked all the media out!





US Navy E-2C, courtesy of Paul Basque, paulbasque.photo@gmail.com

Even once the media tent was erected we had no seats or power to upload from laptops etc, just four folding white tables. It wasn't roped off all around the tent thus once the general attendees started to arrive for the evening performance they invaded the little space with shade that we had from the front. The same applied for Saturday, although there were about a dozen plastic seats were provided and a volunteer to keep the attendees out, which was a hassle. So instead of coming into our tent, they stood right in front thus blocking all of the media from taking images. Excellent! While the person in charge of the media could not do much unfortunately, and she was flooded by complains from the media. Our complains were eventually resulted in changes for Sunday with a proper roping off the area, while our reporter was not present for this it was confirmed by others from the media tent.

There were a lot of cancellations by American Coast Guard and USAF which was understandable due to all the Hurricane relieves in which Canada pitched in too, thus the RCAF did not facilitated transport aircraft apart from a quick fly-in and leaving for the evening show by the CC-177. The Hour of Power was dragged out a bit by the Snowbirds and by the time the Canadian Heritage Flight with the CF-18 and the Vampire, Canada's first jet fighter did their display it was way to dark for proper photography even at 6000 ISO, sure one could get dark and grainy images but with terrible quality, certainly not for publishing. Which was too bad it as it was one of those once in a life-time opportunities to see them fly together in the twilight...

Gates opened at 9:00 on both Saturday and Sunday. Saturday's displays were very good, with only a few interruption by Air Canada and West Jet's regular scheduled service. Our reporter decide to leave the media tent due to aforementioned issues and found a great place towards the middle of the performer's parked aircraft. Some of the performing aircraft like the MiG-17PF enjoyed going very low and was blocked by the parked aircraft, but for those who just watched and did not take any photos it was exciting... Highlights included the rarely seen (these days) RCAF CC-115 Buffalo in a SAR demo, US Heritage with the F-35A and the P-51D and the Canadian Historical Flight with the Cf-18 and the Vampire. International presence apart from the US included an Australian KC-30A of the RAAF on the static side.

Overall it was good air show (if we discount the media issues, not that anyone cares about the media, although they should, as the media provides a valuable service in helping to get people in to the show!!!) Too bad about all the cancellations, but even with all those who did not showed up the static line up had a great variety, thus from the perspective of an attendee it was excellent.

There were plenty of food vendors with typical air show prices, I guess they had to make up for the expensive vendor fees. Toilet facilities were plenty and well spaced out. Apparently 32,000+ as fans poured into the venue for what was Canada's largest military air display and more than likely the best Canadian air show for 2017.

RCAF CC-177 Globemaster III taking off, top of image, with a USAF F-35A nearby in the foreground.





A-10 left top
 USAF Heritage flight: P-51D Mustang and F-35A right top



- US Coast Guard landing and leaving, USAF F-15, F16, RCAF Harvard II, Civilian Short SC.7 Skyvan used by the Skyhawk Jumpers and the CF-18 taking off in the evening
- RAAF KC-30A tanker below





The Canadian Heritage Flight: de Havilland DH-115 Vampire and the CF-18 Hornet





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MALTA INTERNATIONAL AIRSHOW

REPORT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER MIFSUD

Aerospatiale SA316B Alouette III



The Maltese public has always been thrilled by air shows, more so when these air shows are provided free of charge. During the RAF years the civilian population would always be captivated by the sight of the RAF's Gnat Red Arrows, Lightnings, Phantoms, Nimrods and Canberras right up till the withdrawal of British Forces and base closure of RAF Luqa in the late 1970s. The revival of air displays brought with it much nostalgia and attendances have always been quite high. Revenue generation ensued and this assured continued growth and participation in what was destined to become the biggest volunteer run air spectacle of its kind in all of Europe. Its popularity on the international air show calendar brought with it themed tourism, benefitting the whole country's economy and the event itself.

Being a busy international aviation hub for the Mediterranean region, Malta International Airport (MIA) has undergone a number of changes over the years which have inevitably effected the confines of how this air show goes about its business.

When the Malta Aviation Society (MAS) started organising this annual air show back in the early 1990s, MIA was still a relatively quieter airport affording more space for an event of this size with an underutilized secondary runway and several more open fields in its immediate vicinity. Both change and development are however inevitable and the airport has strived to maximize its revenue and profitability by expanding facilities offered to the ever growing demand for low cost carriers, executive jet chartering operations, aircraft servicing and engineering.

Malta is a small country covering just over 316 square kilometres, where building sites creep up overnight and where tower cranes dominate the skyline. The Islands have one airport. The immediate vicinity of MIA is almost entirely built up. Administrative local governance in villages surrounding the airport have always voiced their concerns about the sounds generated by air show jet displays and the potential risks that an air accident could pose for their respective communities.

Such a state of affairs has led the Air Show's organisers to have no option but to accept the shifting of the air display to the coast. For the second in as many years the static park and air display have been segregated from each another resulting in a severe loss of revenue to the MAS. This year's air show has however registered a marked increase in participating aircraft over the last few years. No fewer than 56 aircraft took part in this year's edition of the Malta International Air Show. In this milestone 25th year the event has attracted participants from 12 foreign nations to our shores. Three aerobatic display teams took part, the Turkish Stars and Saudi Hawks employ jet aircraft during their display routines, meanwhile the Swiss PC-7 team uses the turbo powered low winged tandem trainer manufactured by Pilatus.

MAS25 saw the first ever participation by the Northrop F-5, a compact and agile jet which was first tested and flown in the late 1950s. Other notable aircraft participants included the Boeing P-8 Poseidon operated by the US Navy out of Sigonella NAS, an aircraft which is very rarely displayed at air shows anywhere, the Ukrainian Air Force's Antonov An-30 Open Skies and a CF-188 Hornet operated by 433 Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The weather Gods were kind on the air displays. During the Saturday air display which was held between 4pm and 7pm heavy rain clouds loomed in the distance and this posed a challenge for photographers as the sun began to set. Meanwhile on Sunday, the static display in the morning had to be cancelled due to a heavy downpour which lasted until noon. The afternoon display proceeded as planned and the weather remained exceptionally clear throughout the whole three hours.

The three hour air display comprised of the following, here shown in the order in which they flew:

AFM SA316B Alouette III - opening flag ceremony;

Saudi Hawks aerobatic display (Turkish Stars on Sunday);

P-8 Poseidon flew in from Sigonella AB and returned to Sicily after its display (Saturday only);

AFM Agusta Westland AW139 helicopter and a Beechcraft B200 King Air;

French Armee de l'Air Alpha Jet;

French navy Dassault Falcon 50 Surmar;

Swiss AF PC-7 team display; and

Turkish Stars aerobatic display (Saudi Hawks team on Sunday).



Swiss AF PC-7 Team





- AFM Agusta Westland AW139 helicopter and a Beechcraft B200 King Air
- Saudi Hawks aerobatic display, right top
- Turkish Stars aerobatic display, right bottom

Support aircraft

Nine supporting aircraft flew in to ferry the necessary ground personnel, equipment and logistics backing for the three aerobatic teams, these were:

Swiss AF – Beech B1900D – T-729 – supporting the arrival and departure of the Swiss PC-7 team;
 Turkish AF – Airbus A400M – 15-0051 – supporting the arrival of the Turkish Stars;
 Turkish AF – Lockheed AC-130E – 62-13187 (Solo Turk markings) – in conjunction with the Turkish Stars;
 Royal Saudi AF – Lockheed C-130H – 472 – supporting the Saudi Hawks team arrival;
 Royal Saudi AF – Lockheed C-130E – 1623 – supporting the Saudi Hawks team arrival;
 Royal Saudi AF – Lockheed C-130H – 473 – supporting the Saudi Hawks team departure;
 Royal Saudi AF – Lockheed C-130H-30 – 1631 – supporting the Saudi Hawks team departure;
 Turkish AF – Lockheed C-130H – 70-01947 – supporting the Turkish Stars' departure; and
 Turkish AF – Airbus A400M – 15-0055 – supporting the Turkish Stars' departure.

Other notable observations

RAF Tornado GR.4 from 9 Squadron, ZA370 (004) flew in on the Tuesday after the air show bringing a RAF technician to assist in the necessary work on the serviceability of Tornado GR.4 ZG779 (136) of the same squadron. The latter returned to Malta on Monday after taking off due to an onboard technical malfunction. At the time of writing ZA370 was still at Park 5, MIA.

A US Navy MH60 from HSC-28 departed on Wednesday following the air show after a technical matter prevented it from leaving earlier.





- Boeing P-8A Poseidon – VP-16, left top
- McDD CF-188 Hornet - 433 Squadron, left middle
- Antonov An-30 Open Skies, left bottom
- General-Dynamics F-16D – 2 SLT (Tactical Aviation Wing), right top
- RAF BAe Hawks, bottom image by Max Zammit





Dassault-Dornier Alpha Jet E - EAC 314, image by Max Zammit



Image from Norwegian Airlines

The Boeing 737 MAX at Stewart International Airport

Report and photography by Brian R Veprek and as noted

We were recently invited to Stewart International Airport in New Windsor, New York for a behind-the-scenes viewing of Boeing's new 737 MAX 8. Stewart International Airport is one of the best-kept secrets in the Tri-State area despite its role as the diversion airport to JFK Airport. It is now making its presence known with the addition of Norwegian Airlines and its fleet of 737 MAX 8's with direct flights to Scotland, Ireland, and Norway.

Stewart took an unconventional journey to become the international airport it is today. Constructed in 1938 to train West Point Cadets how to fly, it was transformed in 1948 into Stewart Air Force Base. After being acquired by the State of New York in 1970, it was used by various aviation ventures until 2007 when the New York Port of Authority took over with a \$500 million budget and a 10-year improvement/expansion plan.

One of the great improvements to the airport include the addition of a precision CAT 3 runway which will guide an aircraft to land with less than 50 feet of visibility. A CAT 3 runway has visual aids and avionics which a plane equipped with CAT 3 technology can use to guide the aircraft on a perfect centerline to the runway.

Stewart International Airport is also equipped with an elite fleet of 40 pieces of snow removal/control equipment. The go-to piece of equipment for snow removal from the runway is not a plow but a motorized broom. Plows can damage a runway, while the wisp of the circulating broom is gentle. Salt solutions are never used on the runway since salt will corrode aluminum aircraft. Instead, Stewart uses a very expensive chemical solution proven safe for aircraft.

Another essential requirement for any airport is fire and crash rescue services. Stewart obtains superior services from the New York Air National Guard who maintain a base for their fleet of C-17's on property purchased from Stewart.

Following our tour of Stewart, we headed to the Boeing 737 MAX 8 that had just arrived from Edinburg. The 737 Max 8 is the fourth generation of Boeing's narrow body 737 style aircraft. Incorporated in 1916 by its founder William E. Boeing, Boeing is among the largest global aircraft manufacturers today. In August 2011, Boeing launched a program to update the 737. The first 737 8 MAX was delivered to Malindo Air on May 16, 2017.



The most-noticeable change on the exterior of Norwegian's 737 MAX 8 were the advanced winglets. With aerofoils pointing downward, this new design allows for natural laminar flow and maximizes the lift of the aircraft. In turn, this increases the range of a 737 to over 3,500 nautical miles, a 19% increase, setting a new standard in aviation for fuel efficiency and performance.

A new engine, the CFM Leap-1B, was designed for the 737 MAX 8 combining the best engine technologies available today. The engine is fitted with 69-inch carbon-fiber fan blades with a titanium leading edge and chevrons at the rear of the engine casing. The engine is placed higher and farther forward on the wing than in past 737 versions. Weighing in at 6,129 pounds, its 41:1 overall pressure ratio and advanced hot-section materials enable higher operating temperatures resulting in efficiencies including a 15% reduction in thrust-specific fuel consumption, a 20% decrease in carbon emissions, and a 50% decrease in nitrogen-oxide emissions. Its improvements also result in a 40% smaller noise footprint - noticeable to all in the plane and on the ground.

Although tired after a long day, the Captain and First Officer appeared just as you want the pilots of the plane you are riding in to appear - clean-cut, highly aware, and without a wrinkle in their uniforms. The very distinguished Captain explained that he is pleased with the significant improvements made to the cockpit, particularly the four 15" liquid crystal displays which improves his situational awareness and efficiency. When I asked the First Officer of any difference he noticed is flying the 737 MAX he stated that it was "slippier" than other aircraft.

"Slippier?" - I had to ask. The First Officer advised that the 737 MAX 8 is so efficient that it is more difficult to manage its energy when descending. Frankly, it does not want to slow down and descend at the same time. Not a problem for Norwegian's skilled pilots.

The interior of the single-aisle 737 MAX 8 allows for 162 to 200 passengers, depending on the seating configuration. Larger carry-on bins were added. And unlike traditional bins, these pivot downward for easier access and loading. The windows of the 737 MAX are 20% larger than those of its competition, Airbus' A320neo. Boeing also added their unique "Sky Interior" to the 737 MAX 8 allowing for customizable LED lighting to improve passenger comfort in the cabin throughout their flight.

The tail sections of the Norwegian's 737 Max 8's feature black and white images of a variety of famous people.

To date, the 737 MAX 8 has been the fastest selling airplane in Boeing's history with over 3,800 orders from 88 customers. The 737 MAX 8 is the first MAX variant of the 737 MAX to be produced. Additional variations of the 737 MAX - the MAX 9, MAX 7, and MAX 10 - with differences in size and passenger capacities will be introduced starting in 2020.





"AIGEN IM ENNSTAL"

REPORT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY WOLFGANG JARISCH

On September 22nd, The Austrian Air Force celebrated 80 years of Air Base "Aigen im Ennstal" and 50 years' service with the "Alouette III".

The Fliegerhorst "Fiala Fernbrugg" (Air Base named after the famous Austro-Hungarian fighter pilot Benno Fiala Ritter von Fernbrugg - *1890 ; †1964) in Aigen im Ennstal was established 80 years ago. The SA 316B Alouette III has been successfully in service for half a century. This multi role workhorse is ready for all kinds of mission 24/7.

The first four of a total of 29 Alouette's joined the Austrian Air Force on January 27nd 1967. Currently, 22 of them are still in service. By September 2017, a total of 181 860 flight hours were flown with this type in the Austrian Air Force. Due to the cost-intensive spare parts, the type will be decommissioned in 2020.

After the official ceremony and a short break for lunch, the one hour flying display started. It was opened with a three ship Alouette III formation. The lead helicopter with the flag of the European Union was followed by the second helicopter with the Austrian Flag and the third helicopter with the Styrian flag. The flying displays with the Alouettes also included SAR-Missions as well as flights for disaster relief, like firefighting etc. The old workhorse also shows its capabilities at the frontline. Two Alouettes brought special ops to the battlefield, while a PC-7 was giving close air support.

In between the Alouette displays spectators saw several flight demonstrations from the Austrian Air Force and the Flying Bulls, like the Blanix Team or Sigi Schwarz with his Bo-105, only to name a few.

The show ended with a massive start of 14 Alouettes, which performed two flypasts, lead by the specially painted Austrian Air Force Alouette. Back marker was the Alouette from the Belgian Navy. The final flypast ended when all 14 helicopters lined up in one row in front of the crowd. As the last helicopter landed, the first one took off and bowed in front of the crowd, before he flew back to the parking position. What an impressive sight!

It was an extraordinary day out with free food and drinks. The Aviation Magazine would like to express their thanks to the Austrian Air Force and the local organizers from the Air Force Base at "Aigen im Ennstal".

The official ceremony was opened by officials from politics and military at one of the ramps at the air base. At the center of the ramp was the specially painted Alouette III. The paint scheme on the helicopter shows the Grimling, the 2351m high mountain in front of the Air Base and a big 50 in white and green, for fifty years in service. The white and green color represent the colors in the Styrian flag. A big red-white-red ribbon, symbolizing Austria, runs from the rear to the front of the helicopter and ends in an eagle's head. The festival was musically accompanied by the Upper Austrian military brass band.

The Belgian Navy brought one of their four Alouettes to the event, which took part in the static and in the one hour flying display. Portugal, also an Alouette user, was represented by a military delegation, unfortunately without an Alouette.



Ceremony at the air base with Styrian flags, above
Airworthy replica of an Albatros D-III (series 253), below
The fighter pilot Benno Fiala Ritter von Fernbrugg - *1890 ; †1964 of whom the base was named after, right page



Oberleutnant Benno FIALA-FERNBRUGG, 1890-1964

Fiala, einer der erfolgreichsten Feldpiloten der k.u.k. Luftfahrttruppen, Sieger in 29 Luftkämpfen, entstammte einer Soldatenfamilie. Er studierte Maschinen- und Flugzeugbau an der Technischen Hochschule in WIEN. Bei Kriegsausbruch 1914 kam Fiala als Flugzeugbeobachter zur Fliegerkompanie Nr. 1 auf den russischen Kriegsschauplatz, wo er auch sein technisches Talent anwandte und als Erster einen Radiosender in ein Flugzeug einbaute. Schon im OKTOBER 1914 wurde er nach einem heldenhaften Bravourstück außerordentlich zum Leutnant befördert. Im FEBRUAR 1916 wurde er Oberleutnant und erhielt seine Versetzung zur Fliegerkompanie Nr. 19 an die Isonzofront, wo er im AUGUST bei einem Bombenflug schwer verwundet wurde. Nach seiner Genesung zum Piloten ausgebildet, war Fiala ab DEZEMBER 1917 bei der Fliegerkompanie Nr. 51J an der Piavefront im Einsatz. Seit JÄNNER 1918 entwickelte sich unter seinem Kommando diese Kompanie bald zu einer der gefürchtetsten österreichischen Fliegerkompanien. Zum Höhepunkt in Fialas Jagdfliegerleben wurde der 20. JUNI 1918, der Tag der „Luftschlacht um den Montello“. Fialas Jagdstaffel lieferte einer feindlichen Übermacht einen Luftkampf, bei dem ohne eigene Verluste fünf Gegner abgeschossen wurden, drei davon von Fiala selbst. Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg weiterhin im Flugwesen tätig, wurde Fiala 1925 persönlicher Mitarbeiter Professor Junkers. Auf Fiala gehen auch einige wichtige Erfindungen im Flugzeugbau zurück.



SAR demo with the Alouette III left top
A 50th anniversary beautifully painted Alouette III , main image





The event ended with a massive fly past of 14 Alouettes, main image
Austrian S-70A-42 Black Hawk, left bottom
Alouette from the Belgian Navy, right bottom





Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Air Show

REPORT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFFREY ARNWINE

The 2017 Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Air Show was held on September 22-24 and once again a large crowd came out to the popular event held in San Diego. Gates opened early at 8:00 am and the many thousands of attendees had the opportunity to visit an arsenal of static display aircraft and tents. Highlighting the static display lineup at the show were (3) F-15 Eagles of the California Air National Guard, (3) F-16 Fighting Falcons of the Arizona Air National Guard, the new F-35B Lightning II, and many F/A-18 Hornets based at Miramar.



Flying activities officially kicked off at 9:00 am with radio controlled aircraft from local hobby groups in the San Diego area. Many of the early performers were of the aerobatic class which featured Sean D Tucker in his Oracle Challenger III biplane, Steve Stavrakakis in his rare Romanian IAR-823 known as the "Wild Thing," Anthony Oshinuga in his Pitts Special, Boyd Willat in his sailplane, Dan Buchanan in his special effects hang glider, and John Collver in his North American SNJ Texan known as the "War Dog" who would race the Shockwave Jet Truck.

Starting off the military portion of the flying activities was the AV-8B Harrier II demonstration. The Harrier performing was based out of MCAS Yuma, Arizona and performed multiple high speed passes and even showcased the hover capabilities of the jump jet.

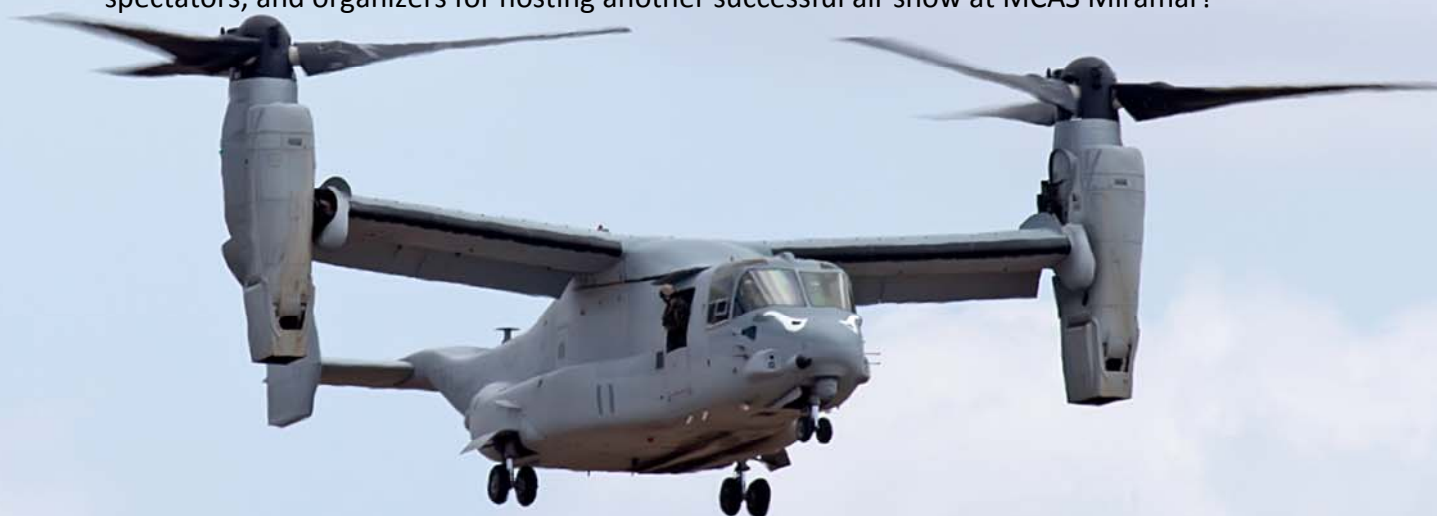
Opening ceremonies kicked off at 12:00 pm with the singing of the National Anthem and a performance by the U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team. Shortly after the ceremonies ended the stage was set for the Marine Air Ground Task Force, popularly known as the MAGTF.

The MAGTF is a crowd pleaser at the Miramar air show because it showcases many different Marine aircraft with a simulated air to ground combat mission. (2) F/A-18 Hornets and (2) AV-8B Harrier II's represented the fighter group in the demonstration and performed a variety of high speed passes with pyro on the ground to simulate an attack run. (2) UH-1Y Venoms and (3) MV-22 Ospreys carried multiple ground troops to engage in up close battle with ground enemies. 2 AH-1Z Vipers acted as attack helicopters for close air support to the troops on the ground. At the end of the routine, all the aircraft participating in the MAGTF flew together in formation with a KC-130J Hercules simulating a refuelling run with the F/A-18s and AV-8Bs.

Highlighting the air show was the United States Navy demonstration team known as the Blue Angels. Unlike normal, the Blue Angels were not the final flying act to perform at the show. Their performance began an hour earlier at 2:00 pm. In their routine lead by commanding officer and leader Capt. Ryan Bernacchi, the Blue Angels performed multiple manoeuvres including formation flights, formation breaks, and solo head on passes. At the end of their performance, the team walked over to the crowd to meet spectators and sign autographs. After the Blue Angels finished their performance, the show continued on with a demonstration by the MV-22 Osprey. The Osprey was based out of Miramar and took off from the far right of the base near the parking lot. The demonstration routine featured multiple passes and various hover manoeuvres.

Concluding the flying activities of the air shows was a solo demonstration by the newest fighter in the Marine Corps, the F-35B Lightning II. The F-35B is the short takeoff and landing variant of the aircraft and first stealth fighter with those capabilities. The F-35B performed a routine full of high speed passes, afterburner, and sensational hovering. On the last day of the air show, the three F-35B's that were at Miramar for the demonstration departed for their home at MCAS Yuma, Arizona.

After the flying portion of the air show was over, spectators were able to continue visiting the many static aircraft and tents that were available to check out. Special thanks to the active duty, volunteers, performers, spectators, and organizers for hosting another successful air show at MCAS Miramar!



- Bell AH-1Z Viper main image
- (2) F/A-18 Hornets left bottom inset
- John Collver in his North American SNJ Texan known as the “War Dog” racing the Shockwave Jet Truck, right bottom inset.





Air Base Meiringen, Switzerland



Report and photography by Peter Thivessen





After closing the Air Base in Sion at end of 2017, Meiringen will be one of the three fighter jet bases left operating, along with Air Base Payerne and Air Base Emmen.

The Air Base Meiringen is located near the hamlet of Unterbach and between the town of Meiringen and Brienz, in the canton of Bern. The wonderful landscape is a feast for the eyes.
ICAO Code LSMM ; Position 46°44'36" N 008°06'36" E



The airfield is situated in the steep-sided alpine valley of the Aar river. It is flanked to the north by the main road to Meiringen, the river, and the Brünig railway line. There is only a single runway, parallel to the river, is from west to east (10/28) and follows the contours of the valley. The taxiways in the south are quite unusual, one of them that routes aircraft to and from the cavern on the south side, crosses a public road. Meiringen is the only Swiss airbase that uses an aircraft cavern in daily operations.

It is the home base to Fliegerstaffel (Squadron) 11 "Tiger", equipped with the McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Hornet. The former militia Squadron 8, equipped with the Northrop F-5E/F Tiger, was dissolved in 2017. The remaining F-5s will be merged with the other F-5 squadrons from 2018 onwards.

The Air Base Meiringen is and will remain an important building part of the Swiss Air Force and at the same time an important economic factor for the region. The magazine is looking forward to a visit in 2018 on the occasion of a repetition course (WK=Wiederholungskurs).



- McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Hornets of Fliegerstaffel 11 left side
- Eurocopter AS532UL Cougar Mk (T-336) from Lufttransportstaffel 6 (Air transport squadron) based at Alpnach, right top
- PC-12 of the Armasuisse, an interdependent branch of the MoD, operates a special equipped Pilatus PC-12 with the civil registration of HB-FOG to calibrate the radars, right bottom



AIR TATTOO DVD READY FOR TAKE OFF

F-5E The F-5E of the Patrouille Suisse are used as a target towing aircraft from Air Base Emmen, top and a F/A-18 taking off, below.



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Blue Flag 2017

Article and photography by Carlo Kuit & Paul Kievit



F-16I block 52+ Sufa

The third edition of the biennial exercise Blue Flag took place between the 2nd and the 16th of November 2017 at Ovda Air Base, Southern Israel. The airbase exists since 1982 and is perfectly suitable for large scale exercises with close proximity to various ranges with low level flying options and ability to simulate Surface to Air Missile (SAM) threats.

The airport is a shared civilian/military airport, for the two weeks all civilian airlines traffic is cancelled. Blue Flag is the largest international aviation exercise the Israeli Air Force (IAF) has hosted to date with over 100 aircraft and 1000 personnel from eight countries, the organization took over a year with a large conference during June 2017 to finalize preparations. The exercise is held across the whole Southern part of Israel. During the missions the airspace is unlimited for the participants with no limitations in altitude or speed. Flying operations are conducted with two missions a day (Sunday-Thursday) by the Blue Forces. Three night missions were also planned. On average a mission takes 60-90 minutes. The exercise has a similar set up as the annual exercise 'INIHIOS' hosted by Greece and 'Anatolian Eagle', the last edition of this exercise took place during 2016 at Konya Airbase in Central Turkey.

The Blue Flag Air Forces consisted of the following countries; the United States (USAFE), Poland, Italy, Greece, India, France and Germany. Blue Flag is broken up into two stages. The first stage, during the first week, allows the air forces to acclimatize themselves to the environment and each other. The second stage, during the second week, the participants rehearsed complex scenarios and coalition flights. During some of the sorties, the participants flew against the "Flying Dragon" Squadron which simulated enemy forces, SAM batteries and MANPADS (Man-portable air-defense systems). The various exercise days are split into familiarization flights, warm up, Defense Counter Air (DGA), Blue versus Blue (BVB), Small Force Exercise (SFE) and was concluded by a Large Force Exercise (LFE), the most complex scenario of Blue Flag. Participating aircrew executed one sortie per day.

While most large-scale military exercises are conducted with a real or fictional enemy in mind, an international exercise like 'Blue Flag' doesn't have these scenarios. In Blue Flag these are of a more generic nature with Air-to-Air battles, strike missions, defensive counter air exercises, suppression of enemy air defense operations (SEAD), electronic warfare and low-level commando missions in which the Indian Air Force and the Garud Commando unit played a vital role together with Israeli Special Forces.

Ovda airbase is home of the 115 squadron 'The Flying Dragon Squadron' which transitioned to the F-16C during April 2017, they previously operated the F-16A 'Netz'. The squadron operates as Aggressor unit to the participants of the Blue Force. The exercise is frequently compared with the 'Red Flag' exercises held each year in the Nevada desert at Nellis Air Force Base, which is hosted by the United States Air Force. As in 'Red Flag', the participating units are split into "red" and "blue" teams which then conduct simulated air battles.

The Falcon Land versus Nowhere Land war is the centerpiece of 'Blue Flag' in which fictional Falcon Land is made up of the seven foreign countries India, Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Greece and the United States and Israeli Air Force squadrons. Their opponent, Nowhere Land, is led by the IAF's 115 squadron, which is specifically used in exercises to mimic enemy aircraft.

During the 'Blue Flag' Media Day Israeli Air Force officials stated the objective of the exercise was three-fold; strengthen diplomatic relations between the countries, expose the participating militaries to new tactics and techniques and improve military cooperation by encouraging the air forces to work together.

"The first edition of the 'Blue Flag' exercise took place in 2013 with four countries and has now grown being Israel's largest exercise and has also a number of firsts in the 2017 edition. The Indian, German and French Air Forces are all here for the first time, with Poland, Greece, Italy and the United States have all participated in previous editions" according to Ops Support Unit Commander Lt Col P. "Success factors for us are to be able to operate from one airbase, plan and debrief together and have a centralized exercise management, both base ops and exercise ops. Main challenge we encounter is the various levels of English language skills of participants".

The operational and logistical challenges of such an exercise are unprecedented for the IAF, hosting 35 aircraft from seven different countries, at its most southern airbase, along with another 26 aircraft of five different IAF squadrons from other bases. Ovda is the IAF's only base dedicated mainly to training, rather than hosting operational squadrons, and is used to having air-crew and maintenance teams of other squadrons visiting. However, as one of the commanders of the exercise explained, "I can't fly the international crew's home for the night or put them up at the relatively Spartan facilities on base. We want them to go home with a positive experience on all fronts." Most of the 700 foreign personnel in the exercise are therefore being hosted for the two weeks of Blue Flag in hotels in nearby Eilat.

The Indian Air Force decided to send a C-130J Super Hercules aircraft along with a group of 'Garud' commandos who trained for a week with the Israeli Air Force's elite units out of Nevatim airbase with additional activities at Palmachim and Tel Nof. The IAF Special Forces consisted of Unit 5101 (Shaldag Commando) and Unit 669 (Airborne Rescue and Evacuation). The latter was initially mandated to extract and provide medical treatment to downed pilots beyond enemy lines. However, in later years the unit also participated in extraction of soldiers of other arms of the IDF. The role of the Garud Commando Force matches closely with the task assigned to the two special units of the Israeli Air Force. During the second week of 'Blue Flag' the Indian C-130J and the Garud Commandos joined the 'Blue Flag'. Supporting the Indian C-130J and Special Forces was 103rd Squadron ("The Elephants"), which operates the C-130J locally designated "Shimshon".

The first-ever visit of the German Air Force to Israel was not the only historic event during Blue Flag 2017, the exercise also saw the return of French fighter jets in this particular case the Mirage 2000Ds which are stationed at Nancy Air Base in the Eastern part of France. The last time dates back to 1956, when, as part of the Suez campaign, French squadrons deployed to Israeli airbases.

The Patriot air defence system was also deployed for the first time during this exercise. The battery, which is normally stationed near Dimona, provided the surface-to-air cover for Nowhere Land, and according to its Commander has been very successful in intercepting. 'Everything we were allowed to target we have been able to knock down'. The main opposition for the Patriot were the Italian Air Force Tornado IDS as part of Falcon Land forces.

The Israeli Air Force participated with four squadrons equipped with F-16C/D 'Barak', F-16I 'Sufa' and F-15 'Baz' aircraft. The F-16I 'Sufa', based on the F-16D and is heavily modified with Israeli-designed systems. Clearly visible are the Conformal Fuel Tanks (CFT) and the larger 600-gallons underwing fuel tanks giving it an extended range, equal to the F-15I 'Ra'am'. Heart of the weapon systems is the AGP-68(V) X Radar, which has a Synthetic Aperture Radar mode, enabling the tracking of ground targets day and night, at any type of weather. It has an Elta satellite communication system for long range communication inside the enlarged spine, next to an advanced electronic warfare system developed in Israel. Between 2004 and 2009, 102 F-16Is were delivered to the IDF.

Early in 2009 the IDF decided to start with the upgrade of the F-16C/D fleet to ‘Barak 2020’ standard. Upgrades give almost the same level of avionics equipment as that of the latest F-16I block 52+ ‘Sufa’ in service. The modernization came through after a long test period with the new upgrade suite being installed on a test F-16D ‘Brakeet’ ("Thunderbolt"). The upgrades boost interoperability and facilitate integration of new weapons packages between its fleet of approximately 124 F-16C/D's and 101 F-16I's. Under ‘Peace Marble II’, the IDF was supplied with 75 F-16C/D's (block 30), the first F-16C which arrived in October 1987 and the first F-16D was received on December 21, 1987. Following the cancellation of the locally designed ‘Lavi’ fighter project in May of 1988, a follow-on order was placed under ‘Peace Marble III’ agreement for 60 F-16C/D block 40 aircraft (30 F-16C's, 30 F-16D's), plus an option for another 15 aircraft. The first of these jets arriving back in August 1991. With the 2020 upgrade programme the F-16C/D ‘Barak’ is expected to remain in service till around 2030. Currently the IDF is the largest operator of the F-16 besides the US Air Force. The F-15 ‘Baz’ platform has been in service since the mid-1970s. Currently about twenty-five F-15 ‘Baz’ of various versions (A/B/C/D) are in use with the IDF. Next to the ‘Baz’ the F-15I ‘Ra’am’, which is a version of the F-15E Strike Eagle developed especially for Israel, is in service.

Israel received the first of its initial order of two single seat F-15As and two, two seat F-15Bs in 1976 under the Peace Fox foreign military sales program. These aircraft were largely used as test, training and evaluation planes so that the Israeli Air Force could prepare for its full order to arrive. Another 19 F-15As and two F-15Bs were delivered by 1978, entering active service with 133 Squadron at Tel Nof airbase.

During the early 1980s, the IAF received the improved F-15C/D Baz. Eighteen F-15Cs and eight F-15Ds were delivered during the 1982-1983 timeframe. These new jets were more capable than their predecessors in almost every respect, although their airframe remained visually nearly identical to the older A/B models. These F-15C/Ds were in no way replacements for the IAF's older A/B models, instead they were meant to augment the battle proven ‘Baz’. Over the years the ‘Baz’ fleet has been upgraded to local requirements. Installed have been GPS guided weaponry (JDAM) which allows to work as pinpoint, all weather, fixed target strikers without having to rely on optically guided weaponry. The ‘Baz’ can also still work as standoff weapons. In addition, the Baz’s speed, range and stability made it an ideal platform for tactical reconnaissance.

As the ‘Baz’ has similar range as the ‘Ra’am and ‘Sufa’ it can work as a forward deployed networking and command and control node, absorbing the battle picture via data-link from fighters within its line of sight and then send this information up to a satellite, which then beams it back down to Israeli commanders hundreds, or even thousands of miles away. This can also go in the opposite direction, with new orders, alerts of pop-up air defenses, and other updates being sent from behind friendly lines or from orbiting strategic intelligence aircraft to the F-15B/D ‘Baz’. From here, the ‘Baz’ can disperse this information to the rest of the non-satellite communications equipped strike package. This high bandwidth satellite communications modification can be seen on F-15B/Ds packing a large bulbous satellite communications dome just behind the environmental cooling system vent, located on the jet’s forward spine.

During 8 November two F-35Is ‘Adir’ were delivered to Nevatim Air Base. The two aircraft will join the seven fighters that landed in Israel over the past year and are the latest addition to the 140th Squadron (‘Golden Eagle’). With nine ‘Adir’ aircraft in Israel, the platform will soon undergo an initial fitness inspection. The first two ‘Adir’ landed in Israel about a year ago, and seven additional aircraft have arrived. Throughout the past year the fighter underwent a series of tests and experiments in which the IAF learned to operate the new platform such as live munition fire and aerial refueling. During December 2017 the squadron will undergo a fitness inspection in which the F-35I capabilities and readiness will be validated. Upon the completion of the inspection, the ‘Adir’ will become operational. It is expected the F-35I will participate in the next edition of Blue Flag.

Participants Blue Flag 2017

Type	#	Unit	Country	Air Base
Mirage 2000D	5	EC 01.003/ EC 02.003	France	Nancy
F-16C/D	5	6ELT	Poland	Poznan
F-16C/D	4	335 Mira	Greece	Araxos
F-16C/D	6	31FW/ 510th FS	USAFE	Aviano (IT)
EF2000	6	TLG73	Germany	Laage
Tornado IDS/ECR	5	6 Stormo	Italy	Ghedi
C-130J	1	Garud Com-mandos	India	-
F-16C/D	6	101 squadron	Israel	Hatzor
F-16C	5	115 squadron	Israel	Ovda
F-16I	6	107 squadron	Israel	Hatzerim
F-15A/C	9	133 squadron/ 106 squadron	Israel	Tel Nof
F-15D	5	133 squadron	Israel	Tel Nof





Israeli F-16C left top
German EF2000 left bottom



French Mirage2000D right top
USAF Europe F-16C right bottom



California International Airshow

Report and photography by Geoffrey Arnwine

The 37th annual California International Airshow took place at Salinas Municipal Airport on September 30 and October 1, 2017. This year's show featured the U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor as the headlining act along with other performers including the Canadian CT-142 Dash known as "Gonzo."

Gates opened at 9:00 am and attendees were able to visit the different static aircraft and tents on display. Due to the hurricane relief efforts on the East Coast, many of the aircraft that were planned to be on static display including a C-17 Globemaster III and C-5 Galaxy could not make it to the show. This resulted in a lot of empty space on the static ramp compared to previous shows held.



Flying activities officially kicked off at noon with the opening ceremonies featuring the National Anthem. Once the ceremonies finished, air show performers took to the sky. There was a good amount of aerobatic acts that participated including Sean D Tucker in his Oracle Challenger III who flew on Saturday only, Vicky Benzing in her red Boeing Stearman, Bill Stein in his specially painted Edge 540, and Kent Pietsch in his Jelly Belly Interstate Cadet who performed a comedy routine, truck top landing, and dead stick landing with the propeller shut off.

The show featured a nice variety of warbirds in the flying lineup. Gregory "Wired" Colyer performed a solo routine in his Lockheed T-33 Shooting Star known as "Ace Maker II." There were also WWII flights that included a European Theatre featuring seven North American P-51 Mustangs and a Pacific Theatre which featured the rare Lockheed PV-2 Harpoon, Nakajima B5N Kate replica, and two North American T-6 Texans.

A few rare military flybys also pleased the crowd. Coming from McClellan Airfield in Sacramento was the U.S. Coast Guard C-27J Spartan which flew a couple passes before returning to home base. Something more special that took to the skies was the Canadian Forces CT-142 Dash known as "Gonzo," which put on a very rare aerial performance in the United States with multiple passes.



Lockheed PV-2 Harpoon left top, A Canadian CH-124 Sea King left bottom. The F-22 Demo Team with interesting vapour effects right top, and the A-10 Thunderbolt II and P-51 Mustang USAF Heritage Flight, right bottom.

Concluding the flying portion of the show was the U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor flown by Maj. Dan “Rock” Dickinson. The F-22 Demo Team staged out of Monterey Regional Airport for the show due to the shorter runway at Salinas and “Rock” showcased the many capabilities of the jet with high speed passes, tight turns, and flips. Due to the high humidity, plenty of vapour was present as the F-22 performed its demonstration. Unfortunately, the Saturday performance was cut short after the flat spin due to a mechanical issue with the jet. After the F-22 routine came the U.S. Air Force Heritage Flight which featured past and present fighters of the Air Force in formation together. Saturday featured the A-10 Thunderbolt II and P-51 Mustang and Sunday featured the F-22, A-10, and P-38 Lightning.

After the flying activities finished, spectators were able to continue viewing the static aircraft and tents on display. Special thanks to the organizers, volunteers, performers, and spectators for making the 2017 California International Airshow a success!





San Francisco Fleet Week

Report and photography by Geoffrey Arnwine



2017 San Francisco Fleet Week officially kicked off on the first week of October. Prior to air show activities, there were many tents around San Francisco with souvenirs to purchase along with a variety of other events to attend all day. The Marina Green was the major area that ground activities took place at with multiple booths from vendors and air show performers.

The Fleet Week Airshow started at 12:00 pm with the U.S. Leap Frogs Parachute Team jumping for the National Anthem. Once the Anthem was finished, the team performed a full demonstration which included multiple smoke trails and formation breaks. A C-130 Hercules from the Missouri Air National Guard carried the parachuters on board to perform their jumps. After the Leap Frogs performed, the U.S. Coast Guard performed a rescue demonstration which featured a C-27J Spartan based out of McClellan Airfield in Sacramento and 2 HH-65 Dolphins based out of San Francisco International Airport. The C-27J performed a couple flybys while two HH-65s hovered low above the water of the bay to simulate a rescue demonstration that would occur if someone was drowning in the ocean.

Representing the U.S. Air Force in the show was the F-16 Viper Demonstration Team based out of Shaw AFB, South Carolina. Piloting the F-16 was Maj. John "Rain" Waters. In the demonstration, Maj Waters showcased multiple capabilities of the jet with high speed passes, tight turns, and unrestricted climbs. After the solo routine, the F-16 paired up with a P-51 Mustang for the Heritage Flight. This is a rare formation flight between Air Force aircraft from past to present. The A-10 West Heritage Flight Team was also scheduled to participate but did not appear at the show due to unknown reasons.

The show featured a few of the most talented solo aerobatic performers in the world. Sean D. Tucker flew his popular Oracle Challenger III biplane. This marked one of the last air show performances by Tucker as he plans to retire from his solo career very soon. Another popular aerobatic act was Mike Wiskus flying his Lucas Oil Pitts biplane. Wiskus also flew in formation with the C-130 that carried the Leap Frogs prior the air show.

Concluding the air show as usual was the United States Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron known as the Blue Angels, flying 6 F/A-18 Hornets. Every year, the Blue Angels have been the top headliner for Fleet Week. The team, lead by Cdr. Ryan Bernacchi, showcased many different manoeuvres in their demonstrations which bring the huge crowd to San Francisco every year including tight formations, head on passes, solo sneak passes, and formation breaks. After their performance, the Blue Angels returned to Oakland International Airport where they and many of the other air show performers staged for the event.

The air show portion of Fleet Week officially ended at 4:00pm. Many of the tents and exhibits at the Marina Green and across San Francisco remained opened for people to visit. Special thanks to the volunteers, sponsors, organizers, performers, and attendees for making Fleet Week 2017 a success!



USN P-8 Poseidon Flyby right top, United Airlines 747 Flyby right bottom



USAF Heritage Flight with the F-16 Viper Demo Team and the P-51 right top
Mike Wiskus flying his Lucas Oil Pitts biplane in formation with the C-130 right bottom







The 2017 Aviation Roundup air show officially took place on October 7-8 in Carson Valley at the Minden-Tahoe Airport with a list of stellar performers! Highlighting the air show acts were the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds as the headliner, the U.S. Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet, Canadian CF-18 Hornet, and much more.

Gates opened at 10:30 am so the crowd could visit a variety static displays and tents. The weather was perfectly sunny both days, but Saturday was nice and warm while Sunday was very cold and windy.

Flying activities officially started at noon with the opening ceremonies. The U.S. Army Golden Knights would perform for the start of the show with a full demonstration later on in the day. On Sunday, the team had to cancel their jumping routine due to the heavy winds, which lead to a 30 minute gap in between performers for spectators to take a break before flying resumed.

There was a good amount of aerobatic performers at the show this year. The list included Rob Holland in his MXS-RH Ultimate Aerobatics aircraft, Jacquie B in her Extra 300, former F-4 Heritage Flight pilot Jerry “Jive” Kerby in his RV Wild Blue Rodeo RV, and Bob Carlton in his Super Salto Jet Sailplane.

One of the local performers of the show was a Vought F4U Corsair based out of Carson City Airport. It performed multiple solo passes for the crowd and then had a race with the Smoke ‘n’ Thunder Jet Truck. In the end, the Corsair would win the race across the runway.

A major highlight was the Canadian Forces CF-18 Hornet Demo Team making their first ever appearance in Carson Valley.

Every year the team has a new theme and this year’s commemorated the 150th Anniversary for the nation of Canada. The CF-18 demo jet featured a very special red paint job with a large maple leaf on the top to celebrate the special anniversary. Piloting the jet was Capt. Matthew “Glib” Kutryk. In his routine, Capt. Kutryk showcased the many manoeuvres of the CF-18 in a demo that included the many capabilities of the jet and dedication to 150 years of Canada. This weekend marked the end of the 2017 season for the team as next year will feature a new pilot and theme. Another big military performer at the show was the U.S. Navy F/A-18 TAC Demo Team from VFA-122 “Flying Eagles.” In this routine, the Navy showcased their very own F/A-18E Super Hornet which featured the many tactical capabilities of the jet including high speed passes, high g-turns, and performance climbs. This was the team’s first appearance at Minden since the last show back in 2015.

Concluding the air show was the U.S. Air Force Aerial Demonstration Team the Thunderbirds. This marked one of only two of their performances this year in the state of Nevada. They were the headline act of the last show in 2015 and fans were glad they made their return to Carson Valley. This time, they were able to stage their jets at the show. It was a great opportunity for the crowd to witness the ground action that took place prior to the flying demonstration. Lead by Lt. Col. Jason Heard, the Thunderbirds showcased their many flight routines which included formation flights, formation breaks, solo head on passes, and solo sneak passes. After their aerial performance was finished, the team walked over to the crowd line to meet fans and sign autographs.

After the flying portion of the show concluded, spectators were able to continue visiting the static displays and tents that were available to see prior to gates closing at 5:00 pm. Special thanks to the organizers, volunteers, performers, and attendees who all made the 2017 Aviation Roundup a success!



CF-18 closed the season off for 2017 at Minden



- U.S. Navy F/A-18 VFA-122 TAC Demo Team, above
- Rob Holland Ultimate Airshows, right top
- F4U Corsair Solo Display, right bottom









STINGERS 1ST SQUADRON

ARTICLE BY LASZLO NYARY PHOTOGRAPHY AS NOTED



The **1st Squadron** is a fighter squadron in the Air Component of the Belgian Armed Forces. It is part of the 2nd Tactical Wing and operates F-16 MLU Fighting Falcons.

The 1re Escadrille de Chasse was founded in February 1916 as the first dedicated squadron of the Aviation Militaire Belge. It drew upon the men and equipment of the previously existing provisional Escadrille I. In August 1917, upon receiving the new Hanriot-Dupont 1 aircraft, the first version of the famous "Thistle" symbol was designed by André de Meulemeester as the squadron's insignia, to be painted on the aircraft. He also selected the squadron motto "Nemo me impune lacesit" or "No-one can challenge me unpunished". In March 1918, it would be reorganized into the 9ème Escadrille.

At the start of World War I, Belgium was neutral. An overwhelming invasion by the German army left Belgium partially occupied by the end of 1914. As a result, the Aviation Militaire Belgium was based in the diminished remnant of a small country, and performed largely in a static defensive mode.

Captain Fernand Jacquet and Lieutenant Louis Robin scored the squadron's first victory on 20 May 1916. The Belgians would claim 52 aerial victories and be credited with 15, at the cost of five Belgian pilots killed in action and one accidental death.

After World War II, the modern Belgian Air Force was founded in 1946. The "Thistle" was accorded to 351 Squadron of 161st Wing at Florennes Airbase. On January 10, 1948, this unit became 1st Squadron of 2nd Wing. From that day to the present, the squadron shares the identity and the traditions of the 1ère Escadrille de Chasse of 1917.

Since 1989 the Squadron flying the F-16 MLU and is part of the Belgian Air Force's core combat capability, and as such has been called upon extensively over the past years. Being Belgium's only operational squadron still in active service with roots dating back to the First World War, they are proud to uphold the traditions and fighting spirit of the Belgian Air Force.

In 2017 a specially painted F-16 "Blackbird" was commissioned to celebrate their 100th Anniversary, as shown in the above image. In November 2017 a contest was opened for a drawing of their "Blackbird" on their Facebook page. Our editor entered the contest and won. See the winning image on the next page.

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- The winning drawing, top
- Facebook notification, left bottom
- Visits Laszlo's website for detailed aircraft profile prints such this one, right bottom:
www.aircraftprofilesbylaszlo.com/index.html





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Winner of contest and chosen by Stingers 1st Sqn of the Belgian Air Force for their F-16 MLU "Blackbird" Commemorative print!



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