

AirshowStuff

Magazine



Inside:

The RNLAf Museum
Brazilian Smoke Squadron
T-34 Air to Air
NAF El Centro Photocall
CoNA Kickoff in San Diego
John C. Stennis Tour
Photo Contest
Reports from the Field
and more!

March 2010

AirshowStuff

Magazine

March 2010

Cover Photo

Chief Petty Officer Kenneth Smart applies the Centennial of Naval Aviation emblem to VX-31's retro-colored F/A-18C Hornet during the Kick-Off Celebration at Naval Air Station North Island. Photo by Kevin Helm. For more, see page 42.

- 6** Hunters Over Leeuwarden
- 10** RNLAf Museum
- 14** "Chuckie" Flies Home
- 18** Fumaça...ja!
The Brazilian Smoke Squadron
- 24** Blue Angels Winter Training 2011
- 26** Mentors In Flight
- 34** NAF El Centro Photocall
- 40** Centennial of Naval Aviation Section
 - 42** CoNA Kickoff/San Diego Parade of Flight
 - 82** Special Paint Scheme Profiles
- 86** Photo Contest!
- 88** On the Edge of NATO
Photos From Latvia and Lithuania
- 94** Airshow Season Kicks Off
Valkaria Air Fest



How does this work? It's easy! If you are viewing the Flash version, you can click on any of the articles above to go directly to that page, or you can click on the corner to turn the page just like a real magazine. You can return here at any time by clicking the link at the bottom of the page.



Monthly Photo Contest

If you are a photographer, pick your best shot and enter our monthly photo contest! Just take your photos at an airshow or airport and send them in to RS@AirshowStuff.com!

Photo Contest Rules

- Two entries per person per month.
- All entries must be your own work.
- All photographs must be from the current calendar year.
- Photos must be at least 1000 pixels on their longest side.
- The photographer retains all rights to the entered images.

We will review all of the entries and pick one winner and two runners up to get published. The winner will receive a free DVD set or 8x10 print of their choice from AirshowStuff.com. If you don't win, try again next month! Good luck!





See yourself here!

If you are an airshow enthusiast, we want your help! Everything you see in this magazine is created and submitted by people like you. All it takes is a simple e-mail each month with photos or articles you would like to submit. We may even be able to help you get a media pass if you cover a show for us! If you would like to join our team, please drop us an e-mail at RS@AirshowStuff.com We'd love to have you!

This publication is copyright 2011 Ryan Sundheimer and may not be printed, edited, sold, or distributed without prior written consent. All photographic and textual works submitted and used in this publication remain property of their respective owners.

Thanks to those who contributed to this issue!

Juan DeLeon
Marco Ferrageau
Kevin Helm
Charlie Lai
Melanie D. Lee
Kevin Martini
Ricky Matthews
Antonio More'
Andy Nixon

Christiano Pessôa
Timothy Reynolds
Alan Radecki
Christopher Roberts
Pieter Stroobach
Sean Sydnor
Brandon Thetford
Dennis Vos

AirshowStuff Online Magazine Staff

Editors: Ryan Sundheimer
Anthony Richards
Chad Grosvenor
Coordinator: Chad Grosvenor

*If you can dress yourself,
And you like to fly,
You will love these.
Check out the AirshowStuff Store
for some awesome apparel!*

Hunters Over Leeuwarden



Article and Photos
by Dennis Vos

RNLAF was kind enough to give them their own space at Leeuwarden Air Force Base and they now have a shelter for the aircraft and a little building to use as an office/meeting room. The aircraft is flown for about 40 hours a year and makes quite a few trips to various air shows in the Benelux. When it's not flying at shows, it is used for pilot training. In 2008 they had permission to expand the activities to two aircraft. They acquired an F.6 which was flown in during April of 2009 to represent the type as it has flown within the RNLAF (The T.8c didn't fly here in active service). Both aircraft do represent the RNLAF in that day and it's a great thing

to see that we keep the history of our Air Force intact by using the official colors they once had.

The sun was shining on the day of my visit, but some low clouds gave cause to worry. The Hunter is restricted to VFR flights, so the planned flights became uncertain. After being picked up at the gate and escorted to their premises, it was time to meet the people who take care of the aircraft and the pilots that fly these jets. They indeed had to wait until the weather improved and then suited up for some flights. The delay gave us an opportunity to enjoy some "Fryske Sûkerbôle" (Frisian Sugarbread) and talk about the various activities the Foundation

does. When the pilot heard that they had the green light to go ahead with the operations, we all headed out for the aircraft inside the shelter. The T.8c was to be the lucky bird that had to go airborne. The F.6 had some problems that had to be solved before it could fly, and unfortunately this problem kept it grounded for the entire day.

It was a great opportunity to see the ritual of getting in the aircraft and taking off. There were two flights scheduled so it was quite a busy day, with enough time to relax between the two sorties and to look at some other activity that was happening around the base. I was only allowed to take pictures of the Hunter because we were in an area that is usually restricted to Air Force personnel only. Because of the activity around the Hunter, I had time to take enough pictures that I wanted. The second sortie was flown in the afternoon in even better light so again my camera went all the way to capture this magnificent and beautiful aircraft.

When the Hunter is flying its demo routine, the pilot is letting us see how the aircraft performed during its active duty. Although the Hunter doesn't have any supersonic capability (only in a shallow dive), the aircraft itself is indeed very agile and fast when it's airborne. The sleek lines say something special about this piece of aviation history and although it was mostly used in Europe, the shape is recognized all over the world. One of the other



characteristics the Hunter has is that you can hear a howl when it's making a dive. Operators call this the "Blue Note" and although it isn't known what causes the sound, it's only heard from a few types. The pilot who is certified to fly the demo is also a well known demo pilot who flew the F-16 demo for the RNLAF in the late 90s, so he knows a thing or two about flying demonstrations. Because I am fortunate to see it a couple of times a year, I can say for sure that if you see the demo, you will be amazed.

All good things must come to an end and soon after saying thanks to the whole crew it was time for me to head home. We promised to meet each other next year at Leeuwarden Air Force Base during the annual RNLAF Open days. A big thanks to the Hunter crew and RNLAF is not enough for this wonderful day!



Marco Ferrageau

RNLAF Museum

Soesterberg, Netherlands

Photos by Dennis Vos





"Chuckie" Flies Home

Article and Photos by Ricky Matthews



As the sun began to set on a cold, cloudy day in rural Virginia Beach, VA, a few hundred people gathered to watch the arrival of a piece of history. Suddenly, a dark object appeared in the distance flanked by a pair of World War Two fighters. The B-17 "Chuckie" had arrived at the Military Aviation Museum, flanked by a P-51 and Spitfire.

Jerry Yagen owns the Military Aviation Museum, an amazing collection of World War One and Two

replicas, all in flying condition. Yagen currently has over 30 aircraft with many more in restoration. Restoration is currently done off site, at a hanger at the Suffolk Executive Airport in Suffolk, VA. A new hanger is being built at the Military Aviation Museum where guests in the future will be able to watch the restoration.

"Chuckie"'s flight was no easy one. The flight was from Meacham Field (KNFW) in Fort Worth, Texas, to the museum airport (42VA)

in Virginia Beach, approximately 1,079 nautical miles away. The setting sun caused some worry among the aircrew of "Chuckie". The Military Aviation Museum has no runway lights, and had "Chuckie" arrived any later than she did, the crew would have been forced to divert to another airport for the night. Sunset that night was at 5:19 PM, and "Chuckie" arrived just shortly before that. The temperature at flight altitude was below freezing the entire flight,

and with no internal heating the aircraft, the crew felt the effects from it. Over Lake Drummond, radio contact between the museum and the aircraft was established, and the P-51 and Spitfire headed over to meet up with her. Jerry Yagen in the P-51 communicated to the crew, asking what they wanted to do. They responded, saying they would make one pass, then land.

Making one banked pass over the field, "Chuckie" then landed

and proceeded towards the ramp, where museum staff scurried to move everyone out of the way. Swinging around to face away from the museum, the raw power of the B-17's engines was felt by the crowd, delighting many aviation enthusiasts including myself. The engines were shut down, and crew disembarked the aircraft to meet a smiling Jerry Yagen. Onlookers moved towards the plane to take pictures of the beauty in the amazing sunset of Virginia

Beach. A piece of World War Two history was on the ground safe at her new home.

"Chuckie" will undergo some restoration at American Aero in New Smyrna Beach, Florida before she returns home in May. She is expected to be ready to fly at the Museum's annual "Warbirds over the Beach" airshow on May 20-22nd. The museum also hopes to have her fly at several other airshows on the east coast in the future.

A large, detailed image of a biplane from a top-down perspective, showing its wings, fuselage, and landing gear. The aircraft is white with blue accents and is set against a blue sky with light clouds. The number '903' is visible on the fuselage.

Advertise Here!

We get 20,000+ issue views each month, including producers of shows all over the US and Canada, and each issue is available for free at all times.

NEED WE SAY MORE?

Fumaça...ja!

Article by Christiano Pessôa

The Brazilian Smoke Squadron, or Esquadrilha da Fumaça, has become one of the most sought after acts on the North American airshow scene. Each of the past few years has seen performances by the team at several major airshows in the US and Canada, and if the rumors are true, 2011 will be no exception. Here is a look at the team that could be coming to a show near you this summer!



HISTORY

Air Demonstration Squadron is the official name of the “Smoke Squadron”, a unit belonging to the Brazilian Air Force (FAB). The Smoke Squadron was founded on May 14, 1952 at the School of Aeronautics headquarters in Rio de Janeiro, and is the second oldest demonstration squadron in the world, trailing only the Blue Angels.

The idea of assembling a display team of came from Lt. Ma-

rio Domenech Sobrinho, a flight instructor. Among teaching students and administrative duties, the young pilots arranged time to takeoff with four planes and practice their first maneuvers together.

The first team which was composed of five pilots: Domenech, Paulo Cesar Rosa, Haroldo Fraga Ribeiro, Candido Martins da Rosa and Jaime Selles Collom. The first displays were made without the use of smoke, but the aircraft were

soon fitted with smoke systems to highlight their maneuvers.

One noteworthy pilot in the squadron was Antonio Arthur Braga (1932 - 2003), who stayed 17 years long on the team with 14 of them as its leader. Commander Braga became an icon of Brazilian aviation, and his over 10,000 flight hours is the world record of flying hours in a T-6. He completed more than 1,000 demonstrations with the Smoke Squadron. In 1977 the plane in which he performed, the T-6 PT-TRB, was given to him as a gift in recognition of services rendered to the Smoke Squadron, and he continued to perform aerobatics at air shows in the aircraft.

Over time the members were replaced gradually, but the Squadron still retained the spirit of boldness and determination of the original group.

T-6 TEXAN

The North American T-6 Texan was the aircraft of the Smoke Squadron from its inception until January 31, 1976. They were manufactured under license in Brazil by the aircraft factory of Lagoa Santa during the Second World War. These aircraft made a total of 1,225 performances with the Smoke Squadron, including at the inauguration ceremony of Brasilia, the country’s new capital, on April 21, 1960.

Due to the high operational cost and maintenance of the old T-6, the Smoke Squadron was deactivated in 1976, thus interrupting the dream of those dedi-

cated instructors who created the Smoke Squadron.

T-24 SUPER FOUGA MAGISTER

Following a worldwide trend of other aerobatic squadrons, in 1969 the Smoke Squadron acquired seven French-made CM170 Super Fouga Magister jets, designated as T-24 in the FAB.

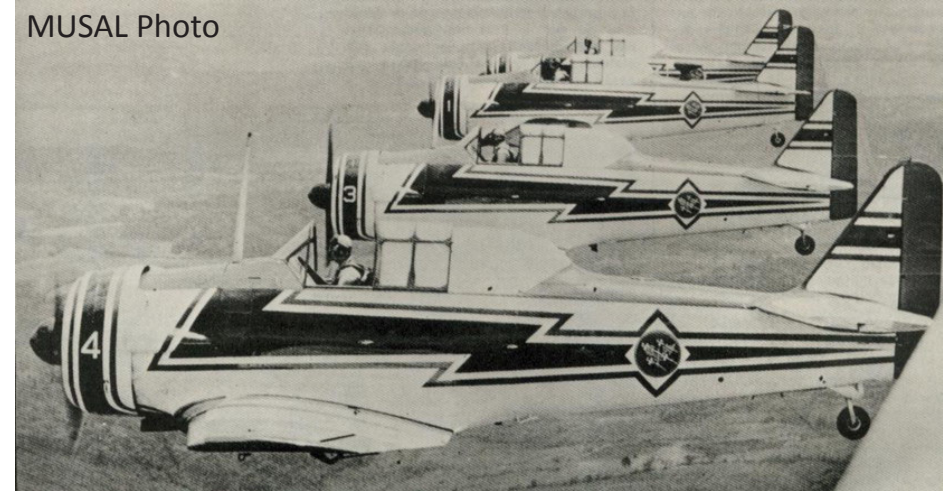
However, the Fouga didn’t fulfill the requirements of the squadron missions. It had low autonomy, lacked ejection seats, and was only able to operate from paved runways, which restricted the presentations to larger cities only. It was used until 1972 and made only 46 demonstrations before the team returned to the old North American T-6.

Of the seven aircraft that belonged to Smoke Squadron, only one was preserved and is in MUSAL - an Aerospace Museum in Rio de Janeiro.

T-25 UNIVERSAL

The T-25 is a plane designed and built in Brazil, used since 1968 when about 150 of them were purchased for instruction at the Brazilian Air Force Academy. In 1980 the Smoke Squadron was revived with the T-25 Universal and became known as “White Comet”. These aircraft were used for a short period until the end of 1983, performing 55 demonstrations. Due to its excellent features, the T-25 is still used for the basic training of future Brazilian Air Force aviators. With the White Comet, the old flame of the Smoke Squadron was rekindled.

MUSAL Photo



MUSAL Photo



Christiano Pessôa

MUSAL Photo



MUSAL Photo



Christiano Pessôa

T-27 TUCANO

The T-27 Tucano is an aircraft manufactured by Embraer in order to train military pilots and joined the Air Demonstration Squadron in 1983. The first airshow the team flew with this aircraft took place on December 8, 1983. Due to its versatility, shown throughout the world by the Smoke Squadron, the Tucano is considered one of the best trainers in the world. This is evidenced by its sales success and its employment by several national air forces.

To date the Smoke Squadron has made over 2,000 presentations using this aircraft. Since

2002, the aircraft have been painted in the bright yellow, blue and green of the national flag.

The Smoke Squadron is the main media representation of the FAB, representing the Air Force and Brazil as a diplomatic tool abroad. The basic principles of the team are:

- Stimulate and develop the aeronautical vocation.
- Promote the Brazilian Air Force and national pride.
- Express the professionalism of all components of the FAB.
- Demonstrate the high degree of training and the ability of Brazilian pilots.



Christiano Pessôa

- Prove the quality of the products of the Brazilian aeronautics industry.
- Represent the FAB in events held throughout the country.
- Promote the policy of social communication in the Air Force Command.
- Contribute to integration between the Brazilian Air Force and other forces.

Administratively structured, each of today's pilots has activities "off the air." They are responsible for maintaining the squadron not only as an acrobatic team, but as a well-structured organization.

The Smoke Squadron is present at the major air shows in the country and around the world, with 3,423 performances in 21 countries in South, Central, and North America.

The efficiency, availability and safety of such aircraft is guaranteed by military technicians who make up the Body of Graduates of the Brazilian Air Force. These maintainers are carefully selected by the high professional technical standard that distinguishes them. Such is the confidence in the quality of their work that pilots have dubbed them "Guardian Angels".

On October 29, 2006 the Smoke Squadron was certified by the Guinness Book of World Records to have flown with twelve aircraft in formation while in inverted flight. In the presence of an audience of approximately 60,000 people, the twelve aircraft streaked through Pirassununga's blue sky, formed up, made a half loop, and settled into inverted



Christiano Pessôa

flight at 300 feet, sweeping in front of the crowd.

The Smoke Squadron has two displays with different maneuvers to account for various weather conditions. The good weather routine, or 'high' show is a sequence of 25 aerobatic maneuvers, with much altitude variation. The bad

weather routine, or 'low' show is a sequence of 17 maneuvers with lower maximum altitudes. The demonstration is performed with seven aircraft which separate into a formation of four, two and an isolated aircraft for better continuity of the maneuvers. Thus there are not many gaps between

maneuvers. From time to time different maneuvers are added or removed from the display, but the performance always thrills the audience. The Air Demonstration Squadron brings joy, draws gasps and presents the colors of Brazil all over the world.



Christiano Pessôa

Blue Angels Winter Training 2011

Article and Photos
by Christopher Roberts

The Blue Angels are now well past the half way mark in their 2011 winter training session at Naval Air Facility El Centro. With a little less than three weeks until the opening of the airshow season, the Blues are working hard with up to 14 practices a week.

Leading the Blue Angels for the 2011 season is first time boss Commander David Koss. Cmdr Koss comes to the Blue Angels after commanding Strike Fighter Squadron 14 (VFA-14), the Tophatters. Cmdr Koss brings with him over 20 years of naval service, 3,000 plus hours of jet time, and 740 carrier landings. In addition, Cmdr Koss completed TOPGUN training at NAS Fallon in 1999. Cmdr Koss takes over leadership responsibilities from Cmdr Greg McWherter who was the Blue Angels Boss from 2009-2010.

Also joining the team this year is Marine Maj. Brent "Two Face" Stevens from VFMAT-101 out of MCAS Miramar. "Two Face" will move into the #2 left wing position. Additionally last year's narrator, Lt C.J. "Brokeback" Simonsen will move into the #6 Opposing Solo position. Rounding out the last of the new pilots is Marine Capt. John Hecker, who was assigned to VT-6 at NAS Whiting Field. Capt Hecker will be one of three Marine Corps pilots flying



the team's C-130 support aircraft "Fat Albert".

The group has enjoyed the excellent weather of Imperial Valley all winter long. The team has been steadily progressing during

winter training, as they build up towards the 120 practice flights necessary to start the season. The team kicks off the season with a Saturday only show at NAF El Centro on March 12.



Mentors In Flight



*Article and Photos
by Christopher Roberts*

“Okay team, we are one minute away from the canyon run,” says my pilot, Jim Ostrich. As he says this I’m looking around thinking, “I don’t see any canyon?” Up until this point my first flight in a T-34 Mentor has been a nice smooth ride through the back country of San Diego County. “30 seconds” comes over the headset, and I still have no idea where he plans on flying through a can-

yon. At this time we are 2500 feet above the ground, and our wing man who was in formation with us for the last 10 minutes is in trail. I look at my watch and have a feeling our thirty seconds is almost up. Seconds later Jim calls me up from the front seat and says “Ready?” Before I could even muster up a response Jim rolls the plane 120 degrees to the

left and we are diving straight at the ground. It’s about this time that I realize that the T-34 Mentor is no Cessna 172. I don’t think I’ve ever felt this many Gs in a plane before. Before I even notice, our altitude has dropped from 2500 feet to a mere 300 feet above the ground. We skim over the cars on the I-8, heading north towards the mountains near Jacumba. It is here where I can peer over Jim’s

shoulder and see a small opening between two large peaks. There is the canyon, and there is the start of our run through Carrizo Gorge. Carrizo Gorge is located approximately 70 miles east of San Diego and is heralded for its stunning beauty and breathtaking views. One of the many highlights of the gorge is an old abandoned

railroad line that once connected San Diego to the Imperial Valley desert. The track winds in and out of the mountain side, and the highlight of the track is the Goat Canyon Trestle which is 200 feet high and 750 feet long. To this day the structure remains the longest and tallest curved wooden trestle in the world. These man-made and natural masterpieces are amazing just to see on a hike,

but I was whizzing by them at 160 knots! As soon as we entered the gorge the turbulence inside was very apparent. I envisioned that this would be a tough flight for a pilot on a calm day, let alone a turbulent day. The turbulence did little to faze Jim as he pushed on deeper into the gorge. Prior to the canyon run I had loosened my shoulder harness a little to be



able to get better air-to-air shots. I soon realized that this was a bad idea as we hit a big bump that put my head level outside of the open cockpit and the wind stream almost ripped off my headset. Jim put the two seat Mentor thru its paces and we were darting thru the gorge like Capt. Matt Cooper

in Iron Eagle II.

As we continued to progress our way through the canyon, the walls opened up into a wash and headed down towards the desert floor. At the end of our canyon run there was a road which ran perpendicular to our path. Sure enough, right before we crossed

it a caravan of cars crossed our paths. I could only imagine the surprise on the face of the drivers as four T-34s buzzed their cars at 50 feet doing 200 mph. We continued to skim the desert floor, sometimes going as low as 20-30 feet above the ground. Since this was November, there were a fair amount of people out camping in the desert, and I'm sure most of these folks were surprised to see four planes flying this low to the ground. It was also about this time that I could feel a little rumble in my stomach. I'd never really done flying like this before, and immediately my mind raced as to how I was going to contain my breakfast should it want to return up. It was my first flight with Jim and I'm sure if I lost my breakfast in his plane, it would



definitely be my last. Luckily for me we finished out desert run and climbed back up to elevation to clear the 4,000 foot plus mountains that stood between us and our return trip back to Gillespie Field in El Cajon. After our hour long hop it was good to be back on terra firma and back into the hanger for lunch, needless to say I wasn't that hungry.

The gathering of T-34 Mentors and T-28 Trojans was orchestrated by Jim Ostrich and his Warbirds West Air Museum located at Gillespie field. The "Warbird Fly-in" was for all warbirds, but geared more for anyone who owned a T-28 or T-34. The fly in included formation training, formation flying, and social events. The high-

light of the event was Retired USAF Brigadier General Robert "Bob" Cardenas' guest speaking appearance. Some of the highlights of BGen Cardenas' career include test piloting the Northrop YB-49 flying wing, and being the X-1 flight test lead, which put him in the pilot seat of the B-29 that dropped Chuck Yeager on his famous supersonic flight.

With the conclusion of lunch, the group of pilots gathered around the white board for their preflight briefing on the day's next flight. Much to my delight the next flight planned wasn't going to featuring any canyon runs (although I will say that if Jim asked me to do the Carrizo Gorge run again I would). The next hop

would feature eight T-34s in formation, and would include a flyby and missing man flight over Mount Soledad just north of San Diego. From there the group would traverse down the coast line and up through San Diego Bay.

The group dispersed from the hanger and headed out to their planes to ready themselves for the next flight. I would again fly with Jim, and we would position ourselves as the lead plane for this flight, perfect for air-to-air shots. We took to the skies of Southern California and the group of seven aircraft (engine issues on one plane grounded it) headed west towards the Pacific Ocean. As we neared Mt. Soledad war memorial our spotter on the ground was

going to help time our arrival with the National Anthem. The seven ship formation performed two flyovers that day, and on the second pass our left wingman pulled up for the missing man formation, paying tribute to all of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

With the flyover complete the group turned out over the ocean again and headed down the picturesque San Diego coast line. This nice smooth flight over water was in stark contrast to the bumpy wild ride through Carrizo Gorge earlier that day. The smooth ride gave me a great opportunity to take photos of the three T-34s hanging off each wing. We soon reached the edge of Point Loma and the mouth of San Diego Bay. We swung around the point and

flew up the bay past NAS North Island. In a fitting tribute to the day four T-45 Goshawks were sitting at the end of runway awaiting takeoff. Both the Goshawk and the Mentor have trained thousands of naval aviators in different times in history, and it

was a unique perspective of the "then-and-now". Next our squadron of warbirds flew past the USS Midway floating museum. From my seat I could see the hundreds of visitors on the Midway's flight deck turning their attention skyward to watch the aerial parade.



The formation continued south past the United States Navy main Pacific Fleet located at Naval Base San Diego (also known as 32nd Naval base). The route which took the group through scenic San Diego Bay would be the exact same route that later would be used for the Centennial of Naval Aviation air parade (albeit the opposite direction). With the bay

trip complete, the formation of seven T-34's headed for home. With the day of flying complete, it was time to sit back (in the old British Airways Business class seats no less) and drink some beer and just talk aviation. The Warbirds West Air Museum was packed with flyers of all ages. I was able to talk to a former Sanddy pilot who recanted stories of

10 hour flights only 200 feet off the deck. There were former Air Force pilots, and Marine Corps pilots, and many Navy pilots who loved to tell stories of their flying days as if they happened yesterday. The evening was capped off with an amazing talk by 90 year old BGen Cardenas..

The allure of flight has always held a tight grasp on me. In recent years I have been giving the amazing opportunity to ride in the back seat of a few aircraft. From the outside the T-34 might look plain and simplistic. However, if you ever get a chance to ride in a Mentor you'll soon learn that it is more than meets the eye. It is no wonder that the US military picked this aircraft to train thousands of its finest aviators. For me I felt very privileged to not only get to experience this wonderful aircraft in flight once, but twice in one fun filled day in the skies above San Diego.



NAF El Centro Photocall

Article by
Christopher Roberts



November is traditionally the month that the aviation photographer starts to pack up the camera for the winter. Airshows at Nellis AFB and NAS Pensacola signal the end of the airshow season, and the cold weather pushes most inside. However for the

lucky few who get the chance, November is NAF El Centro Photocall month.

I was one of the fortunate few who were granted amazing access to NAF El Centro. For me it was the second straight year that I was privileged enough to par-

take in (See the February 2010 issue), and I was able to use my lessons learned during my first trip to better my photos on my second trip.

The day started early for all the photogs in the alfalfa fields adjacent to the base (don't wor-

ry, no plants were harmed in the picture taking of these airplanes). Here the group spent the better part of the morning watching the launch and subsequent recovery of the aircraft from the base. The group was excited to see that VAQ-129 sent a handful of EA-6B

Prowlers down from NAS Whidbey Island, Washington. In addition the Vikings had sent their red-tailed CAG bird to do some training, which was a treat for everyone.

After a few hours of plane spotting from outside the fence,

it was time to go inside the fence line. Last year's trip started out with a quick stop at the hot ramp, which was interesting and offered some good shots. However the consensus of the group was that we all wanted the bread and butter of what NAFEC had to



Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts

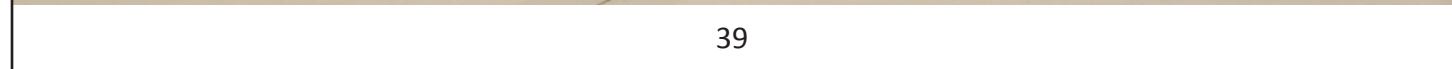


Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts

Kevin Helm



39

offer, we wanted out on the runway. Unlike last year, the easterly winds directed us to runway 8 at the opposite end of the field.

As soon as we set up camp, the first set of Harriers was overhead and breaking into the pattern. Watching an AV-8B hover from afar is impressive, but being almost directly underneath the jet is an awesome sight. After the extremely loud landing by both of the Harriers, three F/A-18 Super Hornets lined up for takeoff. One of the lessons learned from last year's trip was that when multiple aircraft line up to take off it means that one of those aircraft will be really close to you on its takeoff roll. This was no exception. The third Hornet raced by the group

in full afterburner a mere 20 feet from where we standing. Check out the video on my Youtube account – Realbigtaco. Even though this was my second trip to the runway at El Centro I never get tired of the immense “thump” in the chest you get when a jet races by.

As the day wore on there was a large diversity of aircraft that took to the skies over NAFEC. The planes that the group photographed included: F/A-18 Super Hornets, Legacy Hornets, CF-18 Hornets, EA-6B Prowlers, C-9 Skytrain II, a British Apache AH1, and AV-8B Harriers. Of special interest to the group was a flight of 15 Canadian CF-18s that flew into NAFEC, including one that had a

special paint scheme. Also, the Vikings of VAQ-129 and VFM-513 Flying Nightmares had their CAG birds flying.

All in all, it was another great day toeing the edge of the runway out at Naval Air Facility El Centro. I'd like to thank all the folks out at NAF El Centro for taking time out of their busy schedule to “host” our group. In particular I would like to thank PAO Michelle Dee for continuing this amazing experience for all of us photographers and ApSoCal.com for organizing the event. I hope to be out there next November standing on a runway in the middle of the desert, watching planes.

A Year Of Celebration

Article by Chad Grosvenor

Photos by Alan Radecki - Courtesy of Northrop Grumman Corp.



With 2011 being the Centennial of Naval Aviation, it is becoming one of the most talked about and highly anticipated years for aviation. It all started in 1911 when Eugene Ely proved to America that it was possible to take off and land on a ship. Here we are 100 years later honoring a century of mission-ready men and women and recognizing unique aviation-related achievements through events and special paint schemes on certain naval aircraft.

The flying festivities all got started in sunny San Diego, CA on February 12, 2011 with the Cen-

tennial of Naval Aviation Kick-Off Celebration. They kept it classy with over one hundred Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard aircraft from the past and present performing flybys and demonstrations. In addition, the ramp at North Island, referred to by some as “The Birthplace of Naval Aviation”, was stacked with naval aircraft of all shapes and sizes from nearly every period of naval aviation along with modern aircraft painted in all kinds of schemes honoring the progression of naval aviation. This wonderful year will end in Pensacola, FL, also known

as “The Cradle of Naval Aviation”, with the Blue Angels Homecoming Air Show in November.

You can expect us to cover this tremendous milestone in aviation history in all of our issues in 2011. Be on the lookout for a special CoNA section in each issue, containing articles covering periods of Naval Aviation from Ely’s first flight off the deck of a ship all the way up to and beyond the 5th generation F-35, as well as profiles of each of the special paint schemes and reports from centennial events. You won’t want to miss it!

Major Upcoming Centennial of Naval Aviation Events

March 19-27	Jackson Navy Week - NAS Meridian & Keesler AFB, MS
April 9-10	Salute to 100 Years of Naval Aviation - NAS Corpus Christi, TX
April 15-17	NAS Ft. Worth JRB Air Power - NASJRB Fort Worth, TX
April 30-May 1	MCAS Beaufort Air Show - MCAS Beaufort, SC
May 3-9	Centennial of Naval Aviation Week - NAS Pensacola, FL
May 5-11	New Orleans Navy Week & ‘Nawlins Air Show - JRB New Orleans, LA
May 13-15	MCAS New River Air Show - MCAS New River, NC

The Centennial Logo

Article and Photo
by Kevin Helm



CoNA Kick-Off Celebration

Article by Kevin Helm
Photos by Alan Radecki - Courtesy of Northrop Grumman Corp.



On February 11 and 12, 2011 the “Birthplace of Naval Aviation” - Naval Air Station North Island (NASNI), San Diego, CA hosted the weekend-long Centennial of Naval Aviation (CoNA) Kick-Off Celebration. Events included a classic film festival featuring naval aviation, a 5K beach run, a golf tournament, a VIP reception at the

San Diego Air and Space Museum, a gala dinner on the flight deck of the USS Midway museum, a one day public Open House with over 70 static displays, public Navy ship tours at NASNI, and a two hour “Parade of Flight” aerial review over the San Diego Bay featuring 187 aircraft.

This celebration served as the

initiation to a year-long national celebration of the aviation centennials of the US Navy (1911), US Marine Corps (1912) and US Coast Guard (1916). The CoNA will be “a year long celebration of 100 years of Naval Aviation, covering the scope of all naval aviation activities, including aircraft, people, ships and significant events”.

The official Centennial of Naval Aviation patch is approved for wear this year on the right shoulder of all standard flight suits. This emblem was designed by LT Ian Espich, the Maintenance and Material Control Officer for Helicopter Sea Combat Sq (HSC) 21 and was chosen from a field of 38 entries.

The gold braid surrounding the logo represents the 236 years of seafaring tradition of the United States Sea Services. The founding of the Continental Navy occurred on October 13, 1775, the formation of the Continental Marines a month later at Tun Tavern on November 10, 1775, and the

founding of what would become the Coast Guard on August 4, 1790. The gold color was chosen as it one of the Navy and Marine’s two colors.

The blue outer circumference denotes the Navy’s other primary color, blue. This particular shade is the same as that carried on WWII Navy and Marine Corps aircraft. A variation of the patch shows this outer circumference replaced by scarlet to represent the Marine Corps.

The light blue inner circle - horizon and water represent sea and sky, the two mediums treasured by maritime aviators. The wake in the water is a retrospective look

at where Naval Aviation has been. The golden wings represent the human aspect of Naval Aviation - the men and women who have all worked hard to earn their wings and who wear those wings with the great pride. The Naval Aviation pilot wings were selected because they were the original naval aviation wings.

The A-1 Triad and F-35 Lightning II represent the first and most recent aircraft purchased by the Sea Services. The clouds in the sky symbolize that not everything in Naval Aviation is easy. What we do is hard and often times dangerous, and this represents those shared hardships.



Historical NAS North Island

Article by Christopher Roberts

Photos Courtesy US Navy/Naval Historical Center

Pensacola Florida is known to all as the “Cradle of Naval Aviation”, but the United States Navy didn’t begin there. In fact the USN began its flying almost 2,000 miles away on the opposite side of the country. The year was 1911 and while just over seven years prior the Wright Brothers had made their first flight at Kitty Hawk, the military was only beginning to see the use in airplanes. However, the Navy had received an offer from Glenn Curtis and his newly created flying school located near San Diego, California. The year before Curtis had created the first flight

school in America, and to build his school’s reputation and his new aircraft, he offered to train a soldier how to fly - free of charge. The Navy would take Mr. Curtis up on his offer thus cementing North Island as the “Birthplace of Naval Aviation.”

The Navy ordered a young 25 year old Lieutenant named Theodore “Spuds” Ellyson out to San Diego where the Glenn Curtis flying school was located. Curtis was a staunch supporter of the airplane and he believed that it could play a valuable role in the military, particularly the Navy.

This was one of Curtis’s driving forces in making the free offer to the Navy. Ellyson showed up at the flying school on North Island to learn how to fly. Ellyson started right away on learning the intricacies of flight and how to handle an aircraft. On January 28, 1911 Ellyson was at the controls of a Curtiss “Grass Cutter” (so named because it was never intended to leave the ground) airplane. The plane was not supposed to take off and was only intended to demonstrate a high speed taxi to Ellyson. However the throttle block on the controls fell off and before he knew it

Lt. Theodore Ellyson was the first Naval Aviator (although the official distinction as Naval Aviator 1 would come two years later). That same moment Ellyson also became the first Naval Aviator to crash an airplane. Ellyson was not expecting the plane to take flight and the subsequent landing damaged the left wing. Luckily Ellyson walked away unharmed.

Lt. Ellyson continued to work side by side with Glenn Curtis and continued to help him prove the usefulness of airplanes to the Navy. On February 17, 1911 Ellyson helped Curtis taxi his Seaplane out to the USS Pennsylvania which was moored in San Diego bay. The Pennsylvania hoisted the plane onto its deck, and then hoisted it off, showing the practicality of sea planes on ships. With many other demonstrations Curtis with the help of Lt. Ellyson had convinced the Navy that the airplane could be used in the Navy. On May 8, 1911 Captain Chambers prepared requisitions for two Curtiss biplanes. The A-1 Triads purchased on this day were the first aircraft the Navy bought. It is this day that the Navy’s considers the birthdate of Naval Aviation.

The Navy officially moved into North Island in 1917 with the Army. NAS San Diego (and Rockwell field for the Army) saw amazing growth with the onset of WWI. NAS San Diego continued its pre-war tradition of training pilots and had new classes starting every two weeks during the war. By war’s end the base had trained over 200 aviators. In the

Top: Fighting Wing, US Fleet approaching reviewing stand at NAS North Island on January 28, 1930

Bottom: LT Theodore G. Ellyson, USN, seated in a Curtiss pusher airplane, circa 1911



early days the base continued to set firsts. Jimmy Doolittle’s record 22 hour transcontinental flight ended at NAS San Diego. Charles Lindbergh departed Rockwell Field for New York in route to his famous Trans-Atlantic flight. Even the first Navy Aircraft carrier, the USS Langley, called San Diego its home for 12 years. Another

interesting first was the forefathers of today’s “Blue Angels”, the three-plane “Sea Hawks” from VF-6B. The “Felix the Cat” squadron, were thrilling audiences with flight demonstrations as early as 1928.

The Army relinquished control of Rockwell Field in 1935, clearing the way for massive naval growth



NAS North Island on December 27, 1928

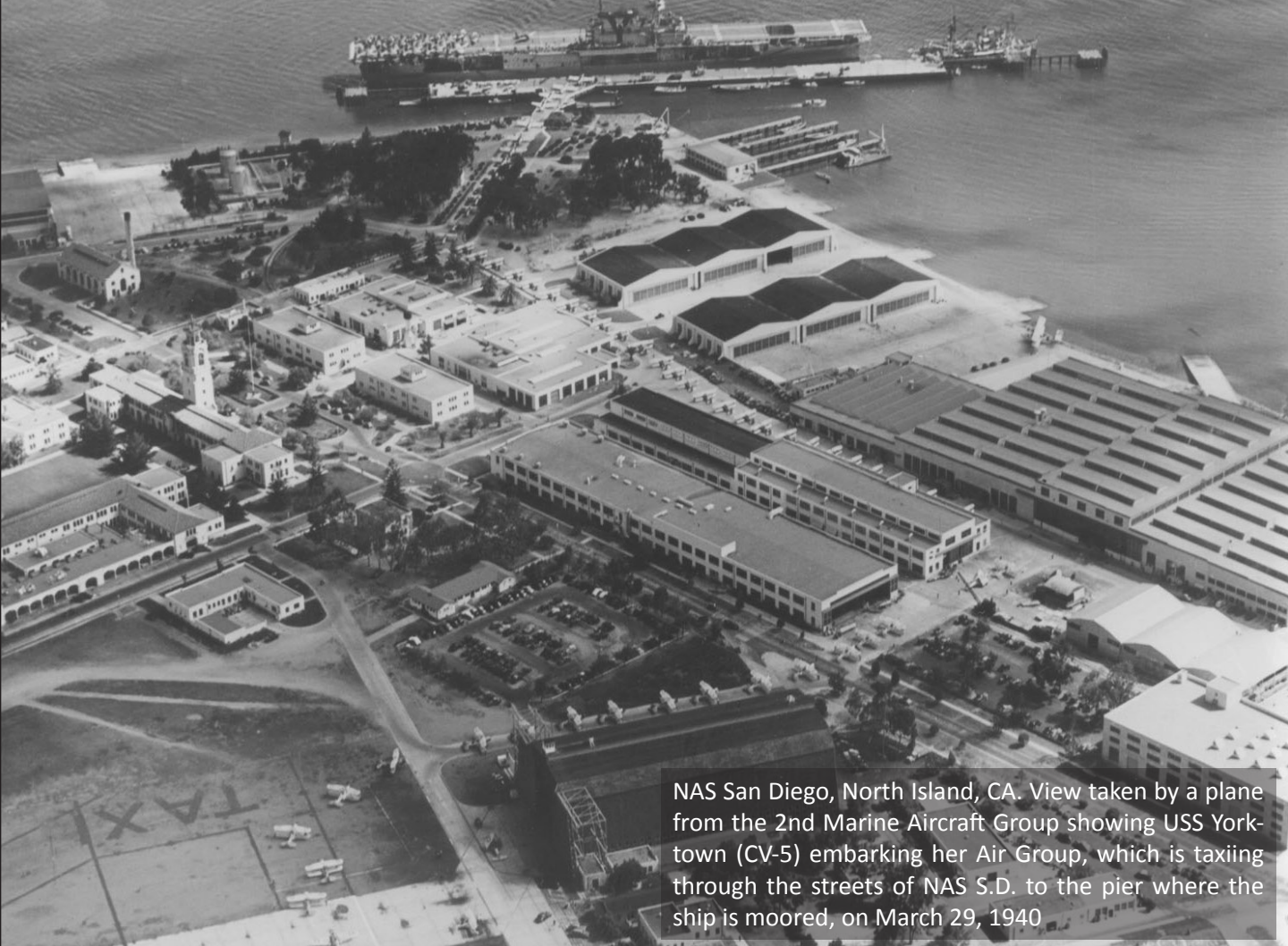
on the island. This coupled with the onset of WWII saw the base and the surrounding city increase to amazing size. NAS San Diego was one of the largest Navy establishments in the world during the war, and it was the headquarters for the Pacific fleet. The base was a vital link in the supply line that helped those American sailors fighting in the Pacific. At the height of the war the base was logging an average of 1,400 to 1,800 takeoffs per day for a war-time total of 1,203,032 takeoffs and 1,196,837 landings. An average of 1,200 aircraft were stationed at any time and an amazing 2,538 were present on VJ-Day



The seaplane ramp at NAS North Island circa 1966. VP-48 and VP-50 P5M Marlins are visible on the ramp with one anchored in the bay in the distance



North Island and San Diego bay seen from the air in 1936



NAS San Diego, North Island, CA. View taken by a plane from the 2nd Marine Aircraft Group showing USS Yorktown (CV-5) embarking her Air Group, which is taxiing through the streets of NAS S.D. to the pier where the ship is moored, on March 29, 1940

(for comparison the Navy currently has 3,700 in its entire inventory). A staggering total of 30,269 aircraft were ferried to and from the station and 13,891 loaded on ships. An estimated 350,000 men received training on the station, which included 16,000 enlisted air gunners and 4,000 pilots. After the war when many bases shut down, NAS San Diego maintained its strong naval foothold in San Diego Bay. In 1955 the base was officially renamed NAS North Island, which it is still called today. In order to settle a dispute with NAS Pensacola, North Island was official dubbed "The Birthplace

of Naval Aviation" in 1963 by the House Armed Services Committee. During the cold war the base specialized in submarine warfare and helicopter training. To this day the base still has 23 aviation squadrons and 80 different tenant commands. As the birthplace of naval aviation, NAS North Island was the best choice for the Navy to kick off the year long Centennial celebration. During the CoNA festivals held at NAS North Island on February 12, 2011 an old, strange looking aircraft with a wooden pontoon crept into San Diego bay. It was a flying replica of the Navy's

first aircraft they purchased. Most who saw it wouldn't even think it was capable of flying. But as the fabric and wood covered airplane skipped over the waves in the bay it finally became airborne. Located just a few hundred yards from this spot was the Navy's newest aircraft, the F/A-18 Super Hornet. It is an amazing contrast to see how far the Navy has come in 100 short years. The crowd was thoroughly impressed with the massive flyover of 35 planes later in the day as the Navy paid tribute to the exact spot, where over a hundred years ago, it got its wings.

A-1 Triad Replica

Article by Chad Grosvenor

Photos by Alan Radecki - Courtesy of Northrop Grumman Corp.

When you look at the first US Navy aircraft and then look at the aircraft currently being used by the Navy, you can't help but to think about how far naval aviation in the United States has progressed in the last 100 years. Aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss played a major role in the development of the US Navy's initial aviation program. He designed the first aircraft to ever take off from and land on the deck of a ship and spent much of his time and effort in seaplanes. Glenn's first designs for seaplanes were destined to become the most widely-produced aircraft in the United States before World War I. Curtiss named his aircraft the Triad, later designated the A-1, because it was able to operate from the land, sea, and in the air.

On January 26, 1911, Glenn Curtiss first introduced the Triad to Navy observers when he piloted the maiden flight from North Island in California. He took off from and landed on the beaches of Coronado and in the waters of San Diego Bay. Fast forward 100 years to February 12, 2011, and a replica A-1 Triad took flight in the exact same waters of San Diego Bay with over 100,000 people looking on. This A-1 Triad replica is owned by the San Diego Air and Space Museum, but was built by Henry Hank Wheeler with the help of 44 part time and 3 full time volunteers. This project, which took three years and cost \$20,000, was donated to the museum in 1984. It will be put back on display in the museum in about a month.



US Navy Photo



USS John C. Stennis

Article and Photos by Kevin Helm

The Nimitz class aircraft carrier USS John C Stennis (CVN-74), Tarawa class amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA-5), and Arleigh Burke class guided-missile destroyer USS Pinckney (DDG-91) were open for public tours Feb 12, 2011 as part of the Centennial of Naval Aviation (CoNA) Kickoff Celebration.

During the afternoon Parade of Flight, the super-carrier also hosted over 600 distinguished visitors on the flight deck as the official viewing area for the aerial review. Among those in attendance were the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), Ray Maybus, Comman-

dant of the Marine Corps, General James Amos, Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Robert Papp, Jr., Commander of Naval Air Forces, Vice Admiral Al Myers, and NASA Administrator, Charles Bolden (Major General, USMC Retired).

The Stennis is home-berthed in Bremerton, WA, but was off the Southern California coast undergoing workup exercises prior to deploying later this year. Less than 24 hours after arriving in San Diego, members of the media were given the tour that the general public would receive the following day.

The first stop aboard was the ceremonial quarter deck in hangar bay two. Here sat the ceremonial ship's wheel which was inherited from the now sunk carrier USS America (CV-66). The Stennis received America's wheel, ship's silver and the call sign "Courage". The Stennis also inherited its two anchors from the decommissioned USS Forestal (CV-59). On the hanger wall above was a tribute to Sen John C Stennis and the ship's christening bar.

Occupying a large area of hangar bay two was a VAW-112 "Golden Hawks" E-2C Hawkeye (BuNo 165825) and two HSC-8





“Eightballers” MH-60S Seahawks, one of which had the rotors and tail folded for stowage. Looking forward into hanger bay one, a half dozen more stowed Seahawks could be seen.

Stepping onto the starboard aircraft elevator two, the public ascended to the flight deck to the sound of warning klaxons. Positioned on catapults one and two were a VFA-14 “Tophatters” F-18F (BuNo 166427) and a VAQ-133 “Wizards” EA-6B (BuNo 163048). Also on the flight deck were two more Seahawks; a MH-60R from HSM-71 “Raptors” (BuNo 166567) and another MH-60S from HSC-8.

Visitors walking around the flight deck could experience a variety of sights. The 4.5 acre flight deck was riddled with aircraft tie-down locations and was covered in a rough low solar heat absorbing non-skid surface. There were a multitude of visible hatches, blast deflectors and elevators that aircraft must traverse around if they

are opened or over if they are closed. The steam catapult shuttles sat quietly still like sleeping dragons and seemingly lonesome without an aircraft launch bar in their jaws ready to be hurled into the air. Also still was the angled flight deck that usually sees approaching aircraft bearing down toward the yellow and white centerline. There towering 150 ft over the flight deck was the island, made stately by the numerical “74” surrounded by 123 large lights. Finally, across the San Diego harbor could be seen one of ancestors of the modern aircraft

carrier, the USS Midway (CV-41) museum.

Too soon it was time once again to board the elevator and to depart the flight deck just as aircraft do. Klaxons blared back down to the hanger deck. After a short walk across the tie-down riddled hanger deck, it was a matter of stepping through a couple of watertight doors, past the ship’s seal surrounded by the blue and gold speckled floor and off the 100,000 ton armored floating city. Sincerest thanks to the crew of the USS John C Stennis for allowing us aboard.



NAS North Island Open House

Article by Kevin Helm

When the 50th and 75th anniversaries of naval aviation occurred, the "Birthplace of Naval Aviation" - Naval Air Station North Island (NASNI) hosted open houses and aerial reviews. The tradition continued on Feb 12, 2011 when NASNI hosted an Open House and served as the prime viewing area for a Parade of Flight commemorating the Centennial

of Naval Aviation.

The day before the Open House was Media Day. Over 200 credentialed media were present, with an estimated 25% of those being foreign photographers and writers. Flight deck handlers from the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) spotted arriving aircraft throughout the day while the media jostled

and darted around the active tarmac to capture the happenings. (The Bonhomme Richard Sailors were assisting with the open house set up as a means to maintain their proficiency while their ship is in dry dock) To an aviation photographer discovering what the next aircraft would be and where it would be spotted held the same kind of excitement

of opening presents on Christmas morning.

Since airshows are not held at NASNI, the public reaction to a public event was an unknown quantity. Prior estimates of 50,000 attendees were surpassed when approximately 70,000 people came to the Open House! Coronado Island is primarily connected to San Diego by

the Coronado Bridge which has a maximum capacity of three lanes in either direction. Despite the NASNI base gates opening at 8am and the crowd inspection and entry points opening at 9am, there were lines of cars outside the gates at 6:30am. By 9am the traffic was backed up over the bridge and one mile into downtown San Diego on the I-5 freeway. With the

bridge still gridlocked as aircraft paraded overhead, the California Highway Patrol officially declared the NASNI parking lot and base full at 1:30 PM began routing traffic away from the island.

For those who made it through the hours of waiting in the car and crowd entry lines, the approximately 70 static displays representing 100 years of naval aviation





Christopher Roberts



Kevin Helm
Kevin Helm



Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts



Kevin Helm



Christopher Roberts



59



Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts

were possibly a once in a lifetime gathering. Most aircraft were not surrounded by barriers which allowed the public to come up close and personal with the displays. The ramp remained open until after sunset allowing plenty of time to see every aircraft at leisure.

There was a great deal of color present on the ramp. Nineteen aircraft painted in retro schemes as part of the Heritage Paint project were present from all over the United States. Additionally, five more aircraft were present that were part of lower level legacy paint efforts and three resident Seahawks that had been colorfully painted by Shayne "Flygirl-painter" Meder were on display.

There were some very rare and historic military and civilian aircraft on the ramp. The San Diego Air and Space Museum's flying A-1 Triad replica was on display before and after taking to the water on the bay. Frank Schelling's 1918 JN-4H Jenny (NC3223) has won multiple awards and is one of only two flyable Hiss powered types in the world. The USMC brought an MV-22 Osprey (BuNo 167917) of VMM-166, and the USN brought both an EP-3E Ares II (BuNo 156514) SIGINT reconnaissance aircraft of VQ-1 and a E-6B Mercury (BuNo 164406) "TACAMO" "survivable airborne communication system" of VQ-4. The future of naval aviation was represented by Northrop Grumman who brought mockups of the Navy RQ-4 Global Hawk, the MQ-8B Fire Scout and the X-47B UCAS-D.



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm

Kevin Helm





Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm

Christopher Roberts



The Chino Planes of Fame displayed the oldest airworthy Corsair, a Vought F4U-1A (BuNo 17799, NX83782). This aircraft was assigned to fighter-bomber squadron VBF-14 (Jan 1944 to Feb 1945), VBF-98 (Feb to April 1945), and carrier air support unit (CASU) 33 (April to June 1945) all in the Pacific Theatre during World War Two. The museum states that from the sketchy records available, it appears that

the aircraft actually saw combat service in the Pacific with VBF-14 and/or VBF-98. A notable historic aircraft present was a 1941 Naval Aircraft Factory N3N-3 Canary trainer (N44839) serial number 2952 owned by Stewart Wells. After delivery in June 1941, the aircraft served with Training Squadron 11 at NAS Corpus Christi, TX until May 1943 providing flight training to future naval aviators. On April

26, 1943 instructor Lt. Hammer flew the aircraft's 20th flight that month, a routine half-hour training flight with a young 18 year old pilot in training, the trainee's 26th flight of the month and the 101st flight of his ten month long training program. Six weeks later the 18 year old trainee became a USN Ensign and, at the time, the youngest naval aviator. That pilot is now the namesake of CVN-77, George H. W. Bush, 41st President of the United States. (The aircraft's flight logs also indicate a preceding flight on March 22, 1943 with instructor Lt. Knudson, Bush's 22nd of the month. However, Bush's personal flight log only lists only 21 flights for March 1943.)

The USMC also had a historic aircraft on static display in F/A-18C (BuNo 163508) currently assigned to VMFAT-101 "Sharpshooters" at MCAS Miramar. During Operation Desert Storm in 1991 this aircraft was assigned to VFA-81 "Sunliners" as part of CWG-17 on the USS Saratoga (CV-60) sailing in the Red Sea. On Jan 17, 1991 LCDR Mark "MRT" Fox shot down a supersonic Iraqi MiG-21, scoring the Navy's first air to air kill of the war in the process. The MiG was approaching head on when Fox launched an AIM-9M. After losing sight of the missile, he quickly launched an AIM-7. Forty seconds later the AIM-9M scored the kill, and a few seconds later the aircraft was hit again by the AIM-7. Fox subsequently continued his mission, successfully dropping bombs on an airfield in western Iraq.

Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm

Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm

Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm

Kevin Helm





Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm

Kevin Helm

Kevin Helm

Kevin Helm

Parade of Flight

Article by Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm

The highlight of the CoNA Kick-off was undoubtedly the two hour long Parade of Flight aerial review. A total of 189 aircraft flew is what was described by Navy officials as the “largest military flyover since World War II”. Crowd estimates were as high as 150,000, including the 70,000 people that attended the NASNI Open House and the tens of thousands that watched the aerial review from other areas of Coronado Island and the bay-side waterfront parks and hotels of San Diego.

Due to the close proximity of a major international airport, the FAA mandated very strict guidelines for the event. In order to avoid impacting normal flight operations at Lindbergh Field less than two miles east, civilian and military pilots had to follow the San Diego Bay out to sea. This entailed an approach from the south over the Coronado Bay Bridge followed by a left hand arc that circled around the NASNI crowd before exiting to the southwest out the channel back to the Pacific Ocean. The FAA also mandated a 1500 ft minimum altitude over the bridge, 1000 ft minimum for all aircraft traveling over 200 knots, and a 500 ft minimum for all aircraft. It was surreal to watch the aerial review with the backdrop of normal commercial airliner approaches and departures in adjacent airspace.

Coordinating this aerial ballet from atop Building 346 was the Air Boss, LCDR Ed “Stalker” Chandler and his team of assistants. “That was the hardest thing: Pull-

ing a show together with 30-second to two-minute spacing, with minimal gaps, but getting everybody to be where they needed to be, on time, in the right piece of sky, coming from up to 10 different airfields,” said Chandler.

The US Navy Blue Angels led the aerial review in a delta formation followed by privately owned vintage aircraft and parachute drops by the US Navy Leap Frogs. One Leap Frog jumped from the back of a N2S Stearman at 4500 ft, while the rest jumped from the doors of a Navy Seahawk helicopter. Despite the tough economic times and high price of aviation fuel, several vintage aircraft participated. Notable aircraft included a SBD-5 Dauntless and F6F Hellcat (“Minsi III”) from Chino Planes of Fame, (two and four flyable in the US respectively), the PV- 2 Harpoon “Attu Warrior”, an HU-16 Albatross, a T-2 Buckeye, and the only flyable FJ-4B Fury.

The USMC, USCG and USN air-

Kevin Helm

craft that followed did not disappoint either. Highlights included an Air to Air Warfare tail chase between a juking F-5 and a pursuing F-18, MV-22 Ospreys, an E-6B Mercury (“TACAMO”), one of three flyable S-3B Vikings (VX-30 “Bloodhound 700”), USN F-16s and two separate USN/USMC F-5 adversary formations. Additionally there was an “EW Flight” mixed formation of a USN EA-6B Prowler with two EA-18G Growlers.

The grand finale of the event was a mass flyover of 35 fixed

wing aircraft from Carrier Air Wing 9 (CWG-9) from the USS John C. Stennis (CVN-74). In a formation measuring ¾ mile wide flying at 1500 ft were 29 F/A-18 Hornets (F/A-18E/F Super Hornets of VFA-41 “Black Aces” and VFA-14 “Tophatters”; F/A-18C Hornets of VFA-97 “Warhawks” and VFA-192 “Golden Dragons”); three EA-6B Prowlers of VAQ-133 “Wizards”; two E-2C Hawkeyes of VAW-112 “Goldenhawks” and one C-2A Greyhound of Det IV of the VRC-30 “Providers”. The forma-



Sean Sydnor



Christopher Roberts



Sean Sydnor



Sean Sydnor



Kevin Helm

Sean Sydnor



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Christopher Roberts



Kevin Helm

tion staged from nearby MCAS Miramar, needed 60 miles of air-space to form up and caused the FAA to stop flight operations at Lindbergh Field for a few minutes as it flew over at the predetermined time.

“It was great to see the formation. I’ve already seen a lot of photos and they don’t really do it justice. When you see photos of flyovers from the 1930’s, those aircraft are much lower and are going less than 100 knots. The air wing was going just over 300 knots (approximately 345 miles per hour). Airplanes are designed around a certain air speed for the most maneuverability. A speed of 300 knots for the Hornets is the safest way from them to do that.” said Chandler.

“We are the oldest squadron in the Navy,” said Lt. Carson Miller of the VFA- 14 ‘Tophatters’. “We are all pretty excited to represent ourselves at CoNA with our jets and our team.”



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm
Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Christopher Roberts



Kevin Helm



Sean Sydnor



Kevin Helm

Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm

MCAS Miramar

Article and Photos by Brandon Thetford



The main focus of the Centennial of Naval Aviation Kickoff may have been the extraordinary flyover and events at North Island, but the action that day wasn't only in the skies over downtown San Diego. MCAS Miramar was the launch point for Carrier Air Wing 9 (CVW-9) and other aircraft participating in the flyover. A small group was on location to photograph the launch and recovery of aircraft from between the runways. It was a beautiful day filled with the smell of jet fuel and smoking tires as the aircraft departed in full burner and returned right on the touchdown markers in front of us.

The C-130's were first to launch consisting of Marine KC-130 tankers from both local and visiting squadrons. Following the KC-130s were an almost endless stream of around 45+ F/A-18 Hornets and Super Hornets from CVW-9 and other squadrons. Others involved in the flyover included EA-6Bs, T-45s, E-2Cs, C-2s, EA-18s and F-16s.

After almost an hour and a half of departures there was a short pause before the aircraft began recovering back at Miramar. The variety of aircraft and paint schemes was spectacular as there were numerous CAG jets participating in the event.

Even more impressive was the fact that from Miramar we were able to see the CVW-9 formation as it flew over the bay displaying the massive 36 aircraft formation! We were 20 miles away! A final moment of excitement came when one of the EA-6B Prowlers from VAQ-129 had to make an emergency landing with hook down due to a possible brake failure. Thankfully the aircraft landed without incident and the crew was safe.

I would like to send thanks to MCAS Miramar Public Affairs as well as the Marines who escorted us on base for making this unique opportunity possible.

Squadrons/Aircraft at MCAS Miramar for CoNA Flyovers

VMGR-352 "Raiders"	MCAS Miramar, CA	KC-130J
VMGR-234 "Rangers"	NAS Ft. Worth, TX	KC-130T
VMGR-452 "Yankees"	Stewart ANGB, NY	KC-130T
VMFAT-101 "Sharpshooters"	MCAS Miramar, CA	F/A-18D
VMFA-232 "Red Devils"	MCAS Miramar, CA	F/A-18C
VMFA-314 "Black Knights"	MCAS Miramar, CA	F/A-18A
VMAQ-4 "Seahawks"	MCAS Cherry Point, NC	E/A-6B
VT-7 "Eagles"	NAS Meridian, MS	T-45C
VAW-112 "Golden Hawks"	NAS Point Mugu, CA	E-2C
VRC-30 "Providers"	NAS North Island, CA	C-2
VAQ-133 "Wizards"	NAS Whidbey Island, WA	E/A-6B
VFA-41 "Black Aces"	NAS Lemoore, CA	F/A-18F
VFA-14 "Tophatters"	NAS Lemoore, CA	F/A-18E
VFA-97 "Warhawks"	NAS Lemoore, CA	F/A-18C
VFA-192 "Golden Dragons"	NAS Lemoore, CA	F/A-18C
NSAWC	NAS Fallon, NV	F/A-18E, F/A-18F, F-16N
VFC-111 "Sundowners"	NAS Key West, FL	F-5N
VFC-13 "Saints"	NAS Fallon, NV	F-5N
VMFT-401 "Snipers"	MCAS Yuma, AZ	F-5N, F-5F
VAQ-129 "Vikings"	NAS Whidbey Island, WA	E/A-6B, E/A-18G
VMFA-112 "Cowboys"	NAS Ft. Worth, TX	F/A-18A+
VFA-122 "Flying Eagles"	NAS Lemoore, CA	F/A-18E, F/A-18F





Special Paint Scheme Profiles

Article and Photos by Kevin Helm



Aircraft: TH-57C "Sea Ranger" (BuNo 162064)
 Unit: Training Wing Five – HT-28 "Hellions"
 Stationed: NAS Whiting Field
 Aircraft Mission: Advanced Training - Helicopter
 Period: Pre 1917
 Significance: The first national insignia carried by US Navy aircraft
 Painted by: Vector Aerospace in Andalusia, AL



Aircraft: F/A-18F "Super Hornet" (BuNo 165677)
 Unit: Strike Fighter Squadron – VFA-122 "Flying Eagles"
 Stationed: NAS Lemoore
 Aircraft Mission: Fleet Replacement Training Squadron
 Period: 2009 - current
 Significance: To honor the enlisted
 Painted by: AM1 Whipple, AE2 Gay, AM2 Silva, AM3 Burton, AMAM Boudreau, AEAN Sharp and AMAN Mullins



F/A-18F Super Hornet (BuNo 165677) is painted to represent the current Navy Working Uniform (NWU). Designed and painted by enlisted Sailors in VFA-122.



Aircraft: F/A-18C Hornet (BuNo 165210)
 Unit: VX-31 "Dust Devils"
 Stationed: NAWS China Lake
 Aircraft Mission: Air Test and Evaluation
 Period: Late 1950s – mid 1960s
 Significance: Scheme of Douglas A-4C Skyhawk
 Painted by: NAS Fallon, NV

F/A-18C Hornet (BuNo 165210) "COSO 101" is painted in glossy gull gray and flight test orange to evoke the look of China Lake's A-4C Skyhawks to pay homage to the rich heritage of NAWCWD China Lake, Calif. and the significant flight test contributions to the nation's warfighting capability. The airframe was chosen because it accumulated over 4,000 flight hours. "The entire China Lake workforce played a pivotal role in the history of naval aviation and we wanted to honor those achievements," said Cmdr. Brady Bartosh, VX-31 Commanding Officer. "

Cmdr. Ian Anderson, VX-31 Executive Officer and military aviation history buff, researched China Lake's history for a design concept that would evoke this facility's rich heritage. "We focused on the 1960s" Anderson said, "which saw the development and introduction of innovative new weapons technologies that revolutionized air warfare and increased the combat potential of carrier aircraft during the Vietnam conflict and the Cold War." From 1958 through 1969, China Lake's NAF Flight Test Branch developed and tested a wide array of new conventional weapons on A-4 Skyhawks. The Snakeye, Walleye and Rockeye bombs, and the Shrike anti radiation missile tested here were all used in Vietnam.

After settling on a design concept, Anderson contacted his longtime friend, Capt. Rich Dann, CoNA Director of History and Outreach for CNAF. Based on Anderson's concept, Dann created a template. Two months later, Chief Warrant Officer Chris Obenland and volunteers from VX-31's Contract Oversight Team put the plan into action. Chief Petty Officers Kenneth Smart and Paul Williams, along with Sean Corcoran, spray painted the historic colors onto COSO 101.

This retro paint scheme is a great way to acknowledge our rich history and remind ourselves of the importance of what we do on a daily basis," said Cmdr. Bartosh. "As long as NAWCWD has such dedicated, talented artisans and relevant aircraft like COSO 101, naval aviation will continue to be the premier power projection enterprise as we move into our next 100 years of service."

Aircraft: P-3C "Orion" (BuNo 160770)
 Unit: PATWING 2, Patrol Squadron VP-9 "Golden Eagles"
 Stationed: Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay
 Aircraft Mission: Antisubmarine warfare/Antisurface warfare
 Period: 1957 - 1963
 Significance: Scheme used on large patrol airplanes
 Painted by: Fleet Readiness Center Southeast (FRCSE), Jacksonville, FL

P-3C "Orion" (BuNo 160770) is painted in Seaplane Gray bottom and an Insignia White top, a scheme that was commonly seen on the P5M Marlin and the P2V Neptune, and in some cases the PBM Mariner aircraft from 1957-1963. It was also used on the P-3A for a very short time before the adoption of Light Gull Gray in place of Seaplane Gray.

Patrol Squadron (VP) 9 chose to honor the VP-6 "Blue Sharks" by using the defunct squadron's insignia on the P-3C Orion. The Dictionary of American Naval Aviation Squadrons (Vol. 2) indicates the unit stood up as Bombing Squadron (VB) 146 in July 1943. In September 1948, it became the third squadron to earn the VP-6 designation, which it retained until its disestablishment in 1993.



First Place - Timothy Reynolds (19 points)

Third Place - Kevin Martini (12 points)



Second Place - Kevin Martini (18 points)

Monthly
Photo Contest

Congratulations to the winner of the March photo contest - Timothy Reynolds! If you want to see your photos here, be sure to enter next month's contest! The rules are on the inside cover. Thanks to everyone who entered!

Judging: Each judge selects their top five pictures. Their first choice gets five points, their second choice gets four, and so on. The points are added up and the one with the most points is the winner.

Fourth Place - Antonio More' (10 points)

Fifth Place - Antonio More' (7 points)





On the Edge of NATO

Photos From Latvia and Lithuania

Articles and Photos by Pieter Stroobach

In the aftermath of the collapse of the former USSR, many countries were (re)born. On the coast of the Baltic Sea, the nation of Latvia was again free to set up its own Air Force, the Latvijas Gaisa Spēki, on February 24, 1992.

Early operations consisted of Antonov An-2 Colts and Mil Mi-2 Hoplites. The Colts were used for the Special Forces and Reconnaissance Battalion as well as transport flights. The Hoplites were used for search and rescue (SAR) and pilot training. In 1993 the German government donated two ex-East German AF LET L-410UVP Turbolet transport aircraft to help Latvia build up its Air Force. Early in this century, the more capable Mil Mi-8MTV Hip helicopter was

introduced in to service. These new helicopters are fitted with SAR equipment, but are also used for transportation of troops, medevac and support of the Special Forces.

Nowadays the former Soviet Air Base Lielvarde, where MiG-27 Floggers of 899 IBAP once dwelled, is the base of the Latvijas Gaisa Spēki. Lielvarde is situated about 50km east of Riga. On the 25th of June, 2010, a group of spotters was allowed on Lielvarde for a photo shoot. It was very kind of them to host us, because it turned out to be a national holiday.

The main task of the Latvijas Gaisa Spēki is SAR over the Baltic Sea. Currently the only active air-

craft are the Mi-8MTVs, some of which were at Helisota for maintenance. Some needed work on the runway keeps the only L-410UVP on the ground. Only one Mi-2 is keep in near flying condition, and if funds become available it will act as a trainer. Although the An-2's are officially still active, they appear to be far from flyable. One Mi-8MTV is normally at SAR stand-by on Riga-Skulde, which is closer to the sea than Lielvarde.

Although funds remain a problem for the small air force due to the credit crunch, they are there to deliver that so very needed and extremely underestimated SAR duty.

Thanks to the crew at Lielvarde for allowing us on base!





In June I visited the Lithuanian Air Force with a group. We had a very good visit and we felt most welcome. Our hosts could not have been more cooperative. Lithuania is a very well known name in the history of Europe. During the 14th Century, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was the largest country in Europe. Its fields have been battlefields for quite some time. In more recent history Lithuania was among the first countries to declare independence from the USSR on March 11, 1990.

After the dust settled down and the Russians went away in 1993, there was a service which is called now called the Karines Oro Pajegos (KOP). In December 1994 the former USSR base Zokniai became the first Air Base of Lithuania.

By that time the KOP had a number of Antonov An-2 Colts, two LET L-410UVP Turbolets received from Germany and four

Aero L-39C Albatrosses that came from Kyrgyzstan. There were also three Mi-8s, one Mi-8MTV-1 and two Mi-8Ts which were used for troop transports. Later in the 90s another eight Mi-8s were added, three for transport duties, three for SAR duties and two were modified to Mi-8Ps as VIP transport.

An An-24B and three An-26Bs were added in November 1994 from Lithuanian Airlines. In 1996, five ex-Polish Air Force Mi-2s were added. Reinforcements for the Albatrosses came in the form of two new L-39ZA Albatrosses which were delivered 1998.

Since then things have gone a bit downhill in terms of numbers. Only one L-410UVP, a few An-2s, and the L-39ZAs remain in service. On the positive side, the three An-26s were replaced with three brand new Alenia C-27J Spartans starting it 2006. They are used to support the troops which are part of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF), leading a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in the town of Chaghcharan in the province of Ghor. The An-24 and An-26s are withdrawn from use and two are up for sale as are an L-39C and an



L-410UVP.

There is also a National Guard which disbanded its flying branch in 2009. The Krasto Apsaugos Savanori Pajegos Aviacijos Rinktive (KASPAR), or Voluntary National Defence Service as it was called, had it's own fleet of An-2s, Yak-18Ts, Yak-52s, and PZL 104 Wilgas. A limited number of its aircraft were transferred to the KOP.

There is also the civil registered National Border Guard (Valstybes Sienos Apsaugos Tarnyba) at Paluknys (EYVP). From 2006 onwards this unit has traded its USSR era Kamov Ka-26 Hoodlums in for a set of brand new Eurocopter EC-120B Colibri, EC-135T2 and EC-145 helicopters which are

used in anti-smuggling operations in the framework of and financed by a European Union agreement.

Siauliai - Zokniai (EYSA) is the first Air Base (1 Aviacijos Baze) and the main operating base of the KOP. There are currently three units operational:

- Fighter Flight (Naikintuvu Grandis), which operates the L-39ZA
- Transport Squadron (Transporto Eskadrile), which operates the C-27J and L-410UVP
- Helicopter Squadron (Sraigta-parniu Eskadrile), which operates the several versions of the Mi-8T, Mi-8MTV-1 and Mi-8PS

Also around for liaison flights



and to maintain flying skills are some Yak's. A Yak-18T and two Yak-52s were present during the visit.

Although Siauliai - Zokniai (EYSA) is the main operating base, there are two SAR detachments around the country. The first at Nemirseta (EYNE), where the SAR detachment consisted of two Mi-8s. The Mi-8MTV-1 was very interesting because there is only one of this subtype in the inventory. There were two helicopters because one of them had some technical problems. Given the number of Mi-8s in the inventory, a second was flown in. The second SAR detachment location is Kaunas-Aleksotas (EYKS), where only one Mi-8T was stationed during the visit.

One can say that Lithuania is slowly but steadily improving its Air Force. They keep what is useful and replace what is needed. But in this world there will be always a need for extra funds. The KOP cooperates in the NATO strategic air transport joint program, which gives it access to C-17s, and the NATO Alliance Ground Surveillance joint program which will use the Northrop Grumman RQ-4 Global Hawk in the near future. However, it is too bad that all their planes will be in such a boringly dull gray color schemes. Sure there is a good reason for it but from a photographic point of view the previous color schemes were much better.

Since NATO expanded greatly over the last 20 years, there are several partners which do not



have their own air policing capabilities. For example when the USA withdrew from Iceland the Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) duty was taken over by NATO. On these air policing missions the aircraft are of course only one aspect. There is a whole network of radar sites and command structures that watch 24/7 over NATO's territory.

Since the Baltic States joined NATO, the task to police the airspace was conducted by NATO on three-month rotation from Lithuania's First Air Base in Zokniai/Šiauliai International Airport, near the northern city of Šiauliai.

During our visit, the Polish 1.

Skrzydło Lotnictwa Taktycznego (1.SLT) or 1st Tactical Aviation Wing based in Swidwin was responsible for the mission. The 1 Eskadra Lotnictwa Taktycznego (ELT) or 1st Tactical Air Squadron which operates the MiG-29A Fulcrums was present with four planes. 1 ELT stood up in 2001. This unit follows the traditions of "1. Pułk Lotnictwa Myśliwskiego" (1944–2001). The MiGs have been heavily updated over the last decade to meet NATO standards. Apart from its own MiG-29s, Poland also received planes from Germany and the Czech Republic.

Thank you to the very welcoming crews who hosted our visit!

A Look Ahead...

Sri Lankan Air Force Photocall Coming in May!



Getting spotters keep their mouths shut is a very hard thing to do. So getting a group of 36 spotters silent is nothing short of a miracle. But the friendly officer of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) got it done. One can of course blame the fact that the group was still mildly jet-laggish or that the group was standing at Ratmalana AFB where the transport units of the SLAF are based and still not believing it entirely. But he really said that we were free to walk around on the platform and the hangers, take as many photos as we wanted of everything we liked and ask all the questions we wanted. That we should beware if any planes that were started was added as a friendly warning.

This attitude was very much how we would be treated by our hosts. Ratmalana was only the first of the bases we would be visiting in the next days. The men and women of the SLAF would prove to be friendly, courteous,

professional and go on with their business.

That business is important because the SLAF was busy with rescue missions in the wake of heavy rains which caused heavy flooding in turn. Close to a million people were on the run from the water in the north of the country according to local media. The SLAF was doing what it could to ease the suffering. Until recently the SLAF was also involved in the fight against the LTTE, better known as

the Tamil Tigers. That resulted in a very decent air force of Chinese, Israeli, Russian and USA types. Cessna 150's, PT-6s, and K8s for training. Mil-17s, -24s and -35s, and Bell 206s, 212s, and 412s as the helicopter force. Y-12s, Beech 200s, An-32s and C-130s for transport. And a fighter force that packs a hard punch with Kfirs, MiG-27s and F-7s.

All was in place for a nice spotting trip, check back for more next issue!



Airshow Season Kicks Off

Valkaria Air Fest



Charlie Lai

Article by Melanie D. Lee

When it comes to variety, Florida has it all; whether it be the wildlife, culture, or even the airshows. Kicking off the airshow season in Florida is the Valkaria Air Fest. Located in southern Brevard County and just 10 miles south-southeast of the Melbourne VOR, the small airport has made a name for itself in the past few years with its hometown festival meets community fly-in setting.

This was only its fourth year with aerobatic performances, which have helped the local community greatly with the influx of thousands of new visitors each year to see such iconic names as

Gene McNeely, Patty Wagstaff, Fred Cabanas, and Corky Fornof, with fan favorites like John Black in his Super Decathlon "Blue," and Mark Sorenson as he tames "Titus" the Tumbling Tiger (a Yakolev як55M, N921GR). Even Don "Beetle" Bailey in his L-29, various members of the Valiant Air Command, retro flight, and a number of biplanes and T-28 Trojans were among the full ramp of fly-ins. But what sets Valkaria apart from the rest of the airshows in the region are its local talents. Soaring Aerobatic Champion Mikhael Ponso in his ASK-21 glider showed the beauty of engine-less flight while



Charlie Lai

also minding his energy management, perfectly calculating his landing and pull off right into his parking space. Boeing 757 Captain Roy Davis did some unwinding in his Autogyro, representative of the airport's abundant populous of Light Sport Aircraft as the home of the EAA's Chapter 1288 and the Eagle Sport Aviation Club.

Keith Lickteig, the Owner/Director of The Airplane Co., brought over his "killer bee" themed Extra 300. A leading provider of ad-

vanced flight training for both individual pilots and corporations like Flight Safety International, The Airplane Co. includes courses in upset recovery and unusual attitude training to more than 350 pilots each year at their home base at Orlando Sanford International Airport since 1996.

From a Piper Cub diving in to catch and fly Old Glory for the opening act, to giant model rockets and pro RC aircraft, Valkaria Air Fest has something for every

aviation enthusiast. And even though the sun would set on this Saturday-only event, it was certainly not the end of the day for the airport, as many of the acts of the midday would return to the skies and do it all again in the Twilight Show. With the sun having set and the twilight show over, the airfield would close its gates the same way they opened, with the fwoomph of hot air filling balloons tethered among the stars.

Melanie D. Lee



Melanie D. Lee



Melanie D. Lee



Charlie Lai



Melanie D. Lee Charlie Lai



Charlie Lai



Charlie Lai



Charlie Lai

Charlie Lai



Charlie Lai



Thanks for Reading!