

# AirshowStuff

*Magazine*



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August 2009

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August 2009

## Cover Photo

Dale 'Snort' Snodgrass at the controls of the P-51 Mustang "Glamorous Gal" in Dayton, OH. For more, see page 22. Photo by David Jacobson.

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### 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. If you would like to join our team, e-mail us at [RS@AirshowStuff.com](mailto:RS@AirshowStuff.com)  
We'd love to have you!

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## Getting the Word Out

Article by Jenny Forsythe - American Barnstormer Wingwalking Team  
Photos by Dave Olmstead - Continental Airshow Productions

Okay, so everyone expects to hear the roar of the engines as the planes rip through the air in front of us, but would that really be enough for us airshow connoisseurs? No way! We want the whole shebang... the roar of the engines, the expertise of the show's or performer's personal announcer and the music that really sets the stage for the amazing spectacles in front of us. Even the greatest teams in the world become a bit lackluster without the total audio experience.

I've had the privilege of working as part of the Continental Air Show Productions sound crew for

several years now at a variety of airshow venues and have certainly learned to appreciate all the hard physical work, the science (or should I say physics) of sound, as well as the meticulous attention to details, it takes to provide top quality sound to an airshow. Though some folks would consider the sound crew as merely a 'support service' in the world of airshows, I certainly beg to differ – that team of sound professionals is every bit as much of an airshow performer as any of us!

Through e-mails and teleconferences, the team has reviewed the ramp layout and has estab-

lished a speaker plan that provides optimum coverage for each venue prior to the truck and trailer showing up at this weekend's show site. Their on site job often starts well before many of the performers and statics show up. Early on Thursday mornings the crews start laying out the thousands of feet of wire that will combine to form a multi-zoned speaker layout. Sometimes this is happening mere inches behind the crew that is setting up the show line barrier! Next, they begin setting up the tripods with the heavy long-throw speakers atop, throwing in a combination of short-throw

speakers and subwoofers for the VIP areas, and often lugging the huge super-long-throw speakers to the top of a tall rack or flying them off a large hydraulic lift. They like to put these "super horns" out in the crowd when the ramp is really deep to push sound all the way across the area. They use a wireless system to provide the signal to the speakers which means someone has to align the antennas and remotes across the venue thereby avoiding the hassle and safety concerns of wires running through crowd areas. Meanwhile, back on top of the trailer is an array of radios for the Air Boss, microphones for the announcers, and other equipment to install and test before 'show control' is deemed operational. After all of the wire and speakers are connected, doing the sound check to make sure it's all up and running signals that its time to call it a day– and that's all just in the first day of their work at each site!

Show days entail providing the library of music appropriate to an airshow venue from the time the gates open until the last announcements of the day are made that the show is over and it's time to head for the gates. Throughout the day, the sound techs are constantly awaiting cues from the flying performers and their crews as to when to start music, change music tracks, and



Above: A line of long-throw speakers is just one tool used by a professional sound team. Left: The "super horns" help fill a deep crowd area with sound.

change the music volume so the announcer is heard when speaking. At the same time, part of the crew is inspecting the crowd line from time to time to make certain all the speakers are performing as expected and that no one has run over the wires and disconnected anything inadvertently with their golf carts and crew cars.

At the end of the day, remotes need to be turned off and secured, all the radios, microphones and other sensitive electronics need to be stored back in the trailer, and sometimes every speaker on the line needs to be lowered (or even laid on the ground) to avoid

any trouble from impending overnight weather. All this makes for a very long day, only to get up bright and early the next morning to beat the crowds in and have everything ready to go again.

Of course, the end of the show weekend means that while all of the static and performer aircraft are departing, the sound team is hefting all the speakers and tripods back into the trailer, reeling in those thousands of feet of wire, dismantling show control atop the trailer, and eventually heading down the road for the next show. Did I mention that all this often is done with a crew of just three people? And... all is done whether it is 100° and not a cloud in the sky or 40° and pouring rain!

While not every show chooses to invest in a true performer-quality sound expert team, I think most have caught on to how important the whole audio experience is to their attendees – and there are several quality sound performers to choose from out there in our industry. So the next time you hear all the beautiful sounds of an airshow, remember how much hard work goes into the production of high-quality sound and be sure to congratulate that team of performers on their performance, too!

[www.AmericanBarnstormer.com](http://www.AmericanBarnstormer.com)  
[www.ContinentalAirshows.com](http://www.ContinentalAirshows.com)



# Home Sweet Home!



## The Return of CVW-7

Article and Photos by Mike Lynaugh

I recently had the opportunity to be a part of something I will never forget. On July 29th, after their five month deployment on the U.S.S. Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69) and flying more than 4,600 combat sorties totaling over 16,000 flight hours, Carrier Air Wing Seven was returning home to NAS Oceana.

I have always wanted to be present at an airbase when an air wing returned home to their waiting loved ones, and on July 29th I finally had that chance.

That day all media covering

the day's events had to meet up with the base's public affairs officer at 2PM outside the main gate on Tomcat Boulevard. It was here that we got our briefing as to how the day's events would work. There would be three squadrons coming home this afternoon, VFA-103 "Jolly Rogers" would be coming in at 3:00PM, VFA-83 "Rampagers" were coming in at 3:30PM, and VFA-131 "Wildcats" were coming in at 4:00PM. We would first go to VFA-103's hangar and await their return, cover the event, then hop in the van

and drive quickly to VFA-83's hangar, cover that homecoming, then move over to VFA-131's. After our briefing, the still photographers got in the van and we headed onto the base with a few television station vans following close behind.

We arrived at VFA-103's hangar around 2:30PM and from the moment I saw the families gathered together in the hanger I knew it was going to be a great day. I saw dozens of children running around playing with each other as they were waving around Navy

and American flags....anxious wives laughing together, proud parents telling stories about their sons and daughters that were almost home, and of course there were aircrews in their flight suits telling stories and moving their arms around mimicking the flight path of aircraft as they spun their tales to people gathered under the giant "Welcome Home" banners all around.

As 3PM got closer the skies began looking very ominous and it looked like a very bad storm was on the way. Everyone was looking around and asking each other if this would delay the homecoming, then at 3PM, we got our answer. The storm moved right over the base and the wind picked up and torrential downpours accompanied by thunder and lightning forced everyone into the hangar to seek shelter. It was announced that the homecomings would be delayed approximately 30 minutes to permit the storm to move off base.

As the rain began to lift I went outside in the drizzle to make sure I didn't miss anything, and then from out of the clouds appeared a formation of 12 F/A-18 Super Hornets. At this point the families started running out of the hangar to watch the fly-by and began cheering, children were jumping up and down and we watched as the aircraft broke out of forma-



tion and circled around to land. It was interesting to see each aircraft wait at the end of the runway for everyone to land so they could taxi to the hangar together.

As the Hornets began filling their assigned parking spots that had been vacant for the past five months the families could hardly contain their excitement. They began inching closer and closer waiting for the ok to run out onto the tarmac. Finally the canopies of the aircraft opened in unison and the pilots and weapons system officers climbed down from their aircraft and joined up together where each were handed flowers to give to their wives. As they began walking towards the hangar the families rushed forward and jumped into the arms of their loved ones. It was difficult remembering that I was there to



record the moment; I wanted to just look around and take in what was happening all around me; however I quickly moved around trying to record what I was see-



ing. There was such joy and it was so much fun watching little children that hadn't seen Daddy in months throw their arms around them and be so happy. I must mention though that it did break my heart a few times when I saw small children that did not know who Daddy was. Scenes like that were very few however and it didn't seem to dampen any spirits as everyone was just so glad to be home.

As I was walking around trying to take everything in I got a tap on the shoulder and was told we were loading up the van and

heading to VFA-83's hangar. I got my gear together and hopped in the van along with the other photographers and off we raced to get to get there in time, VFA-83's formation of ten F/A-18 Hornets had already flown over us and were currently taxiing to their hangar.

We arrived in plenty of time to see the families already gathered outside the hangar cheering and holding signs and waving their American flags. This time however as soon as the final Hornet got into its parking spot, and shut down its engines, the families could hardly contain themselves

and ran out to greet their loved ones as they were stepping down from their aircraft. I ran with the group again trying to capture the emotions that were bursting all around me and it was great seeing the looks on the pilot's faces as they climbed down from their jets and their children jumped up into their arms. Every direction I looked I saw pure joy. I ran from Hornet to Hornet attempting to record the moment for each family as they reunited.

As I was trying to capture everything happening in front of me I heard another roar and looked



skyward to see VFA-131's formation of ten F/A-18 Hornets passing over our heads. Luckily this time VFA-83 and VFA-131's hangars were right next to each other so I knew I had more time to stay with the families and record this special moment in their lives.

After about fifteen minutes I knew that soon the Hornets of VFA-131 would begin taxiing over towards us so I headed towards

the Wildcats' hangar and saw the family members excited it was about to be their turn to be reunited with their heroes. Families were dancing and cheering, children were jumping up and down shouting "Daddy" while waving like mad, they could hardly contain themselves. I even had people coming up to me and ask if I could please read them the jet numbers painted on the nose of

the aircraft so they would know which one their husband was in. It was so much fun.

As soon as the final Hornet shut its engines down the families burst forward to greet their loved ones as they climbed down from their jets. Knowing that this was the final homecoming of the day I knew I could spend more time with the families of VFA-131 and make sure I could try to capture every reunion possible. I was now using my 80-200 2.8 lens so I could stay back a little and give the families a little more privacy as they spent some special time together. It was amazing how with so much press running around the families did not seem to notice us at all.

After the reunions the families headed into the hangar for a homecoming party. At this point I decided to give them their privacy and watch from outside the hangar. Soon we all gathered back together and hopped back in the van and headed off base as we shared our stories about what we had all just been privileged to witness.

I would like to thank Kelley Stirling, PAO, NAS Oceana, Mike Maus, Deputy Force PAO, COMNAVAIRLANT, and of course the families members and aviators of VFA-103, VFA-83 and VFA-131 for allowing me to be a part of this special day. It is something I will never forget.





## Floating History - A Visit To The USS Midway

Article and Photos by Christopher Roberts



Nestled quietly in the lazy San Diego Bay rests an iron giant. She has sailed countless miles in every ocean, and 225,000 sailors have served aboard her. Although she has not shot an aircraft off her deck in almost 20 years, she remains as popular as ever. She was born during the darkest days of the Second World War, and is the epitome of naval force. The USS Midway served this great country's Navy for six decades and will continue to serve for years to come as a floating museum.

The USS Midway was still being put through sea trails when WWII officially ended. Just over one month after the Japanese surrendered on the deck off the USS Missouri, on September 10, 1945, CVB-41 (Later changed to CVA-41, then just CV-41) was commissioned into the United States Navy. The Midway held the distinction of being the very first aircraft carrier to be named after a WWII battle. In fact, the "Midway" name was so sought after, that two ships already bearing the namesake were changed (USS Panay and USS Saint Lo ) in order to reserve it for the new "Giant" carrier. Midway was the first in the newly designed 45,000 ton Midway-class aircraft carrier to be laid. Everything about this new ship was massive. Her flight deck and hanger bay were large enough to hold 137 WWII era

aircraft (theoretically). Her four Westinghouse turbines produced an enormous 212,000 horsepower, which gave her a top speed of 33 knots (38 mph). She had two catapults, and before her modification to an angled deck, had fourteen arresting wires and six barriers. In fact, the USS Midway held the distinction as being the largest warship in the world for her first decade of service.

The USS Midway spent her first few years doing fascinating missions on the high seas. In Operation Frostbite, Midway sailed to the sub-arctic waters of the Labrador Sea to test the cold weather operations of an aircraft carrier. A year later, during Operation Sandy, the Midway achieved a landmark, by being the first ship to launch a rocket from a moving ship (captured German V-2

rocket). After a decade of cruises, and a transfer from Norfolk, Virginia to Alameda, California it was decided that Midway was in need of an overhaul. The USS Midway was designed during the era of the WWII straight deck aircraft carrier. Conceived by the British (Some Historians argue it was USN Capt. Dennis Campbell) on HMS Triumph, the angled flight deck ushered in a new era in aircraft carrier operations. The angled deck not only enabled simultaneous launch and recovery of aircraft, but also allowed for an easier "Bolster" or missed approaches of landing aircraft. This was something that was very advantageous for the soon to be arriving "Jet" aircraft that would be landing on Midway's deck. A decade later in 1967 Midway underwent a second overhaul which



Photo Courtesy  
USS Midway Museum



gave the ship her final shape. After the second overhaul the Midway was a radically different carrier then when she entered service two decades earlier. Her length had grown from 972 feet to 1,001 feet, and her overall weight had almost doubled from 45,000 tons to 74,000 tons. These overhauls allowed Midway to continue sailing long past her expected lifespan. She continued to serve this country in Vietnam, including having the distinction of be-

ing the ship to launch the first and last plane to shoot down a MiG in the Vietnam War. Midway also played a vital role in the evacuation of Saigon after the North Vietnamese overran the south. In Operation Frequent Wind, the USS Midway received 3,073 Vietnamese refugees and US personnel in two days. The highlight of the operation included a landing by a South Vietnamese Air Force Major flying a two-seat O-1 Bird Dog, accompanied by his wife and

five children. Midway continued to do cruises in the Indian Ocean throughout the seventies and eighties while being forward deployed in Yokosuka, Japan. While celebrating the ship's 43rd year of service, the Navy had finally decided to decommission the veteran. World affairs, however, would put the old workhorse back on the open seas and sailing to the Middle East in Operation Desert Shield.

For the Desert Shield portion



of the first Gulf War, the Midway was the only carrier in the Persian Gulf. When the UN ultimatum for Saddam Hussein expired, aircraft from the Midway were the initial air strikes to "Cross the Beach" into enemy territory. During the conflict, aircraft from the deck of the Midway flew 3,339 sorties (average of 121 a day), and delivered 4,057,520 pounds of ordinance. After 43 days of combat, the Midway sailed home for Yokosuka, but Mother Nature would convene and the Midway was sent to the Philippines to help with evacuations from the Mount Pinatubo eruption.

In August of 1991, the Midway left her berth in Yokosuka, Japan headed for her last homeport of NAS North Island, in San Diego, California. Although a final "inspection" cruise found the Midway to still be fully operational and fit to continue service

despite her age, the last aircraft, an F/A-18, was launched from her deck by Capt Patrick MoneyMaker (Blue Angels Commanding Officer 89'-90'). After forty-six and a half years of dedicated service to this great country, the USS Midway was given its decommissioning ceremony at NAS North Island. The Midway's old diesel burning boilers were giving way to the new modern-era Nimitz-Class nuclear aircraft carriers. She became the longest serving aircraft carrier in the 20th century. Unbeknownst to all at the time, as she sailed away for storage in Bremerton, Washington the Mighty Midway would return to San Diego Bay 12 years later for her "Final" mission.

In the history of the US Navy there have been a total of 65 major (discounting all small "escort" carriers during WWII, and all Carriers that were cancelled before completion) commissioned

aircraft carriers. Almost one in every two (32 out of 65) meets their demise at the scrape yard. Within the last few decades there has been an increased movement to save these historical gems to preserve them for generations to come. The first such ship to attain "Museum Status" was the USS Intrepid on the Hudson River in New York City. Three additional US carriers: the Hornet, Lexington, and Yorktown, all achieved the same status and started sharing their respective stories. Early into Midway's retirement the US Navy's plans did not include putting the ship on display. The fate of the Midway was to be the same as many of the carriers before her; she was to be sold off as scrape material.

In 1992, after seeing the success of the four other floating carrier museums, a small group of volunteers began to assem-



ble to start the process of saving the Midway. Soon the San Diego group gained momentum and the official process to bring the ship back to them same bay it was decommissioned was underway. Unfortunately the group ran into heavy opposition from some groups to bring the Midway down, and it would take a red-tape-filled 12 years to fulfill the dreams of many to bring the carrier home. Finally, on September 30, 2003 the USS Midway left her Bremerton, Washington home for over a decade and started the 1,500 mile trip down the west coast to San Diego. The ship stopped in Oakland for a few months for painting and pulled up to her new home on January 10th, 2004. Another five months was needed for the hundreds of volunteers to prep the Midway to accept her first guests. The crowds gathered early in the morning of June 7th, 2004 on Navy pier for the much-anticipated opening of this nation's fifth floating aircraft museum. The attendance for that opening day topped 3,057 guests, and since then the museum has seen 4.4 million people in its five-year existence, making it the most visited ship in the world.

The ship is a living breathing historically museum that enshrines the hard work and dedication that has made this country what it is today. One cannot help



but feel a sense of national pride when they step aboard the USS Midway. One of the great aspects of the museum is that they are always adding more open areas in the ship. The museum could have easily just put a few aircraft on the deck, and open the bridge and many guests would have left happy. The Midway museum doesn't want to just tell stories, but rather show the public what it was like to be a sailor in the Navy aboard the Midway. The museum has done an amazing job of opening up the ship to guests. Areas of interest include the hanger deck, forecandle, berthing areas, mess halls, engine room, ready rooms, bomb elevator, and control tower. In all there are over thirty different areas that are open to the public for viewing. The museum is not content with that number either. They are always striving to make the museum better by opening up more areas of the ship all the time. In addition to all of the "inner workings" of the ship, the crown jewel of the Midway is definitely the flight deck.

The four-acre flat top is covered with 21 Navy aircraft. Some of the aircraft are on loan, and others belong to the museum, but all have been painstakingly preserved before being put on display. The quality of the aircraft on display is noticed by many (After visiting the Intrepid museum and seeing

that state of the aircraft there in 2001, the Midway aircraft are in far better shape). Most planes start out in very poor shape, and our returned to former glory by the dedicated volunteers in the aircraft restoration hanger at NAS North Island. It is also noteworthy that a requirement for the museum's aircraft collection is that only aircraft that were on the Midway are displayed. The museum even points out that the F-14 Tomcat never officially had a squadron aboard the Midway, but did have two instances of emergency landings aboard the boat. Like below the deck, the museum is constantly adding new aircraft and soon the Midway will add an F4U-4 Corsair (the first plane to take-off the Midway). As part of your \$17 admission (Military are free of course) you also receive an audio tour that is packed with great information on the ship. Complimenting the exhibits and great aircraft displays, are some of the most knowledgeable volunteers aboard the USS Midway. San Diego has always been a Navy town, and across the bay is the "Birthplace of Naval Aviation" at NAS North Island, so it is by no surprise that there are many retired Navy personal in the area. These volunteers donate their valuable time, sharing their stories about life in the Navy, and in some cases these retired sailors even served

aboard the Midway when she was in active service. These ambassadors of the sea give a window into the history of the Navy and Midway, making a great addition to the museum. After leaving the museum you will garner a great respect for the 225,000 men and woman who served aboard the Midway, including the many aboard who served the ultimate price with their lives.

The Midway has performed many rolls in her lifetime as a United State Naval Warship. She has fought in wars, provided humanitarian aid to hundreds of thousands, and now has become a floating history museum to millions. She was able to weather all storms that were sent her way, and was able to transform and adapt herself in order to serve longer than any other aircraft carrier in the 20th century. It is extremely paramount that we preserve our history for generations to come, and we are extremely fortunate that there is a dedicated few that has made this possible for the rest of us to benefit from. As the USS Midway enters into its seventh decade of public service, I am honored to have been given the chance to experience in the thousands of stories that she has to offer.

[www.Midway.org](http://www.Midway.org)





## ‘Smeagol’ Speaks!

Article and Photos by Chad Grosvenor

Lieutenant John “Smeagol” Stanton is an F/A-18C Hornet pilot in the U.S. Navy and is currently one of the demo pilots for the F/A-18C East Demo Team in the VFA-106 Gladiators at Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia. Most of the time, people meet pilots at air shows, but I met Smeagol online. Not on Air Show Buzz or Fence-check, but on Flickr. He was stuck in a hotel room after the Branson Air Show because their back up Hornet broke, so he decided to look up photos of his performance at the Branson Air Show.

He stumbled upon mine and sent me an e-mail asking if he could have the photos.

I learned a month or so later that he would be flying at the Prairie Air Show in Peoria, IL. Since I didn’t meet him in Branson, I made it a point to meet him in Peoria. When I did, he was one of the nicest, most down to earth guys you could ever meet and he was very thankful for the pictures. When I got home from Peoria, I e-mailed him my pictures of him and asked if he would mind doing an interview.

**What made you want to pursue a career as a US Navy pilot?**

I graduated from the University of Arkansas with a degree in Business Management; and after working in the “real world”, I quickly realized I wasn’t suited for the 9 to 5 job. I didn’t like the suit and tie, and I wanted no part of working in a cubicle. I knew at that point I needed to do something drastically different with my life.

**If you could fly one plane besides an F/A-18, what would it be and why?**

A P-51 Mustang. I think that is a wonderful piece of machinery.

**What’s your favorite maneuver? Why is it your favorite?**

I love the Knife Edge Photo Pass which has been somewhat modified into a High Speed “Sneak” Pass for me. In the jet all the maneuvers are fun, but from the ground this one can be just plain shocking.

**What’s your favorite part about being a pilot?**

My favorite part of being a pilot is the view. I have seen things I could never have imagined on my own--images that few others have seen and that I could never do justice by trying to explain. I love especially the fact that I am a Naval Aviator. As an officer in the Navy, I am given a tremendous amount of responsibility that has nothing to do with flying. I am never



Ryan Sundheimer

bored with what I have to do. Also, the Navy is in the business of operating on and off of aircraft carriers and I find that extremely exciting. Finally, the thrill of flying a jet is an experience that I will be forever grateful for.

**How did you come up with the call sign, “Smeagol”?**

I didn’t come up with the call sign; no one in the Navy picks their own. It has something to do with the fact that I am skinny.

**What’s your favorite part about being on an aircraft carrier?**

Getting off the aircraft carrier.

**What would you say your most memorable moment as a pilot would be and why?**

Performing at the Branson Air Show for my family and friends. That was a once in a lifetime experience that I was very fortunate to do.

**What do you do in your down time?**

I have played the guitar since high school. I had to buy a cheap travel guitar to take with me when the Navy sends me out on the road.

After meeting and talking with Lt. Stanton, I can see why he was chosen to represent the U.S. Navy as a demo pilot. I feel privileged to have met and talk with him and I’m grateful for his service to our great country.





# Photo Tip Of The Month



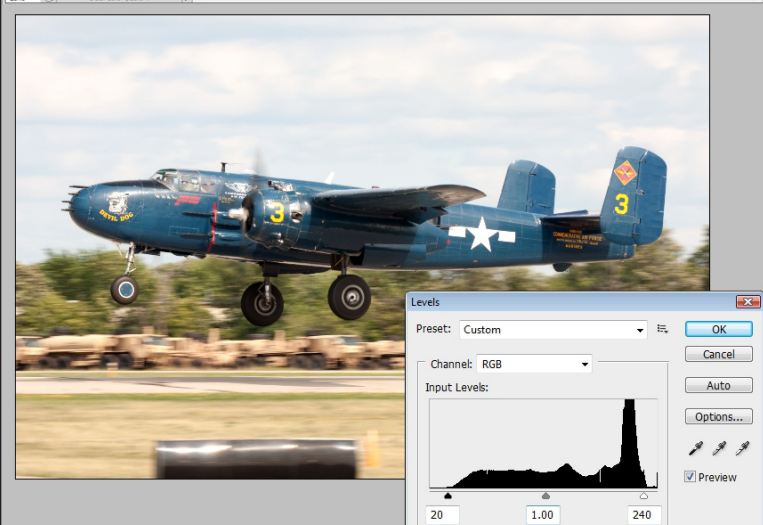
## Basic Editing and Workflow

Article and Photos by Ryan Sundheimer

One of the huge advantages to digital photography is editing your photos. The problem with editing is that the process and programs can be extremely hard to figure out at first. So, I've compiled some basic types of editing and how to do them in my program of choice, Photoshop. This is only part one, so be sure to check back over the next few months to get the rest of the tips!

The first thing I do after opening a photo is crop it - that way I can see exactly how the picture will be while I edit it the rest of the way. When cropping you want to make sure to leave some space around the aircraft. To keep a uni-

Click to turn the page



form aspect ratio, first drag the box around the entire image, then hold shift down while dragging the corners in. This will lock the aspect ratio at that of the original.

You also want to level the picture if there are any ground references. Nothing ruins a photo faster than having it tilted wildly, unless that's the intended effect. You can usually do this by rotating the crop box, and lining one of the edges up against a good reference. This is usually a far off horizon or vertical line like a building edge or antenna. Sometimes the clouds will even hint at the correct leveling of the picture. If there are no ground references, you can get away with rotating the crop a bit to make it fit the frame better.

After cropping, I use the 'levels' adjustment. This is not common to other programs, but it is essentially an advanced contrast control. The black arrow controls the black point, and dragging it towards the center of the histogram (the graph above the arrows) will make the darkest areas of the picture darker. Similarly, dragging the white triangle will make the brightest areas of the picture brighter. The middle triangle can be dragged either way to control how bright or dark the midtones of the image are.

Adjust these as necessary, and continuously check it against the original by checking and unchecking the preview box. Toggling it back and forth several times without taking your eyes off the picture can really help you see if you've gone too far or need to make another adjustment. Once you're satisfied, click OK and check out your masterpiece so far.

Did you find this tip useful? Let us know! Contact me at [RS@AirshowStuff.com](mailto:RS@AirshowStuff.com) with any feedback you have. Be sure to check back in the next few months for the continuation of this tip!

Click to turn the page





## The Vectren Dayton Airshow

### *Celebrating the Wright's Legacy*

Article by Aaron Haase

On Thursday July, 16th. David Jacobson and I arrived in Dayton, OH for the Vectren Dayton Airshow held at the Dayton International Airport. We had been anticipating this weekend for a few months because we were to be attending it for 3 days. Not only that, Dayton put together an outstanding lineup of performers including some very rare appearances.

David and I started our trip by making a visit to the United States Air Force Museum. David has never been there before and I was making my first return since 2003. It had changed a lot. We were astounded to see several new airplanes and David was just amazed at the B-36 Peacemaker. We didn't want to leave, but we had to make our trip to the airport to catch the Thunderbirds arrival. We did not go into the airport but instead found a wonderful spot where the Thunderbirds were flying directly over our head. You don't realize how impressive they really are until you see them up close and from this angle. We also got a surprise while at this spot. The Brazilian Smoke Squadron, Esquadilha da Fumaça, took to the skies for a practice show. To see them from this unique angle was an absolute treat. They fly the T-27 Tucano distinctly painted in their national colors: blue, yellow and green. They perform maneuvers no other demonstration team in the world does, such as the "big mirror"





David Jacobson



David Jacobson



Aaron Haase

pass and an inverted delta formation pass. It was truly a honor to see such a skilled demonstration team fly. Our day was not done however. Earlier in the week, we were invited to come out to the Wright-Brothers Airport to see some formation passes by an F4U-5N Corsair piloted by Dan McCue and a P-51D Mustang piloted by Dale Snodgrass. These guys are some of the best warbird pilots I have ever seen. They fly with a purpose and that is to show how powerful these old birds really are. I want to thank Mint Moore, Dan McCue, and Dale Snodgrass for the fun!

Friday started off with a wonderful experience for me, a ride with the Commemorative Air Force's "Tora Tora Tora" Squadron. These guys are a blast. They fly for history and to bring it to life for all of us to see. I got to ride in the 'Kate' torpedo bomber aircraft. My pilot was Mike Anderson. During the flight he let me open up the back window so I could take pictures without window glare. We went up as a flight of five aircraft, two 'Kate' torpedo bombers, two 'Zero' fighters and a 'Val' dive bomber. This was a flight I won't soon forget. Not only was it historical, it also marked a rare achievement for me. Flying in both World War II torpedo bombers, the 'Kate' and the Avenger. Thank you so much



Aaron Haase



Ryan Sundheimer



Aaron Haase



Ryan Sundheimer



Ryan Sundheimer





Aaron Haase



William Derrickson



Ryan Sundheimer



David Jacobson



Ryan Sundheimer



Aaron Haase



Ryan Sundheimer



Ryan Sundheimer





William Derrickson

Saturday started off in a great way for us as had the entire trip so far. We headed over to the F4U-5N Corsair owned by the Collings Foundation to strap on an on-board video camera for the performance. David was lucky enough to be able to sit in the cockpit of the Corsair. Thanks to Dan McCue and Mint Moore for this opportunity. The airshow was magnificent. Weather was iffy with clouds all around and small shower later in the day. This airshow was centered around military acts like few others are these days. Military demonstrations included the A-10 East Demo Team, East Coast F/A-18F Super Hornet Demo Team, AH-64D Longbow Apache demo, C-17A Globemaster III demo from Altus AFB, and flybys by a B-52 Stratofortress and B-2 Spirit. We also got a very

rare treat of five C-5 Galaxy flybys. Thank you to the 445th AW for coming by in that monster. The USAF Thunderbirds dazzled all the spectators as did the Esquadilha da Fumaça. The U.S. Army Golden Knights were also at this show, but could not jump due to low ceilings. So their C-31 Fokker Friendship aircraft did several passes which was actually a rare but cool thing. Only two aerobatic acts were at the show, Sean D. Tucker and Patty Wagstaff. Two performers who are at the top of the priority list for any airshow. The best solo P-51D Mustang performance was also displayed piloted by the famous Dale "Snort" Snodgrass. Snort flies the best Mustang demo period. Snort also participated in the USAF Heritage Flight with an A-10 Thunderbolt II. Dan McCue also got to do an



William Derrickson

impromptu demo in the F4U-5N Corsair, which was a good thing for us since we had the on-board video in the airplane. The Super Hornet had hydraulic issues and had to land partway through its routine, so Dan filled the time

with a graceful Corsair demo. Tora Tora Tora also performed their historical demonstration. Flying nine aircraft in a recreation of the attack on Pearl Harbor complete with pyrotechnics. It is a demo that words can't describe. It really makes you feel at war with aircraft everywhere and explosions and smoke surrounding you. The men and women of this squadron are truly incredible. Thank you also goes to the pilots of the Wright-Flyer replica who did several passes in the aircraft. Thank you to all who put on this wonderful event and thank you to Shiela Wallace for all your hospitality. I can't wait to return to the Vectren Dayton Airshow next year!

[www.DaytonAirshow.com](http://www.DaytonAirshow.com)

to Shiela Wallace, Tora Tora Tora and Mike Anderson for making this flight possible! My flight wasn't the only one of the day for the AirshowStuff crew. While both of them were working for other media outlets, David Jacobson went up with the U.S. Army Golden Knights and Ryan Sundheimer was able to go up with Tora Tora Tora for their evening flight and missing man. Ryan's aircraft was the pull aircraft for the missing man which was an absolute honor for him.

Friday wasn't over by any means. None of us decided to go into the airshow but instead watch some unique arrivals come in. We saw the NASA F/A-18B come in as well as an F-16A from the Royal Netherlands Air Force. The F/A-18F Super Hornet demo

practice was incredible. On his last high speed pass he pulled a mini-sonic boom, something I have never heard before. We also saw two AV-8B Harriers come in from VMA-542 and two MV-22 Ospreys as well.



Aaron Haase



Ryan Sundheimer



Ryan Sundheimer



# Celebrations in the Northwest



Article and Photos  
by Anthony Richards

For most of the air show season, the Pacific Northwest keeps aviation enthusiasts drawn with dispersed shows around the US & British Columbia starting in May and lasting through July, but once August creeps up on the calendars, that sweet smell of jet fuel whirls up and down the region as the larger shows make their annual appearances. World-famous teams, pilots, and aircraft gather to take advantage of the only time blue skies can be assured over the Northwest to put on top shows like the Oregon International Airshow and the prestigious Abbotsford International Airshow. This year, I once again packed my camera equipment, folding chair, sunscreen, and cooler to make my regular trips to the Seattle Seafair Keybank Air Show and the Abbotsford Airshow; two weekends back-to-back of travel, jets, and fantastic performers.

Opening up the August month as an ever-popular event during the week-long Summer celebration in Seattle, WA known as Seafair is the Keybank Air Show with the Blue Angels highlighting the show. Taking place on the shores of Lake Washington, thousands crowd the beaches and parks bordering the lake to watch the hydroplane races dance across its



surface as aircraft above slice & dice through the azure abyss. The festivities aren't just limited to the Lake Washington area; just west of the celebration, the Museum of Flight hosts the USN Blue Angels and other visiting performers in a party of their own on the edges of Boeing Field. Regular commercial & private traffic remain active as the planes and pilots participating fly out and return from their demonstrations; a tricky schedule to maintain by KBFI ATC seems near flawlessly executed as Cessna's on final glide past F-18s waiting to roll.

Among the Blue Angels, common participants in the Keybank Air Show include USMC AV-8B Harrier II VTOL jets as well as the Patriots flying L-39 Albatross trainer. This year, however, both

the Harriers & the Patriots missed the show, but much to the pleasure of the crowds lining the fences, equally exciting aircraft filled in. Two F-15E Strike Eagles from Mountain Home AFB brought the ground-shaking roars out early in the day from takeoff to final passes on Boeing Field before landing, as well as the ever beautiful T-33 Shooting Star "Ace Maker" trainer from the T-33 Heritage Foundation kept the crowds on their feet in a stunning high-speed bolt from behind the trees and on the deck down Runway 31L, making a surprisingly quicker dash than the Strike Eagle pair made. But when the time came, all photographers perched high atop their ladders (myself included) stared Southward towards the rising plumes of white air show smoke as the

Blues fired up for their turn to dazzle. Proceeding the Blue Angels came the C-130T "Fat Albert" down the tarmac, gear up just as it passed us on the fence north of the Museum, and kicking nose-up halfway down. Always a beautiful sight to see, the Fat Albert ducked in and out of sight from below the treetops on Beacon Hill separating us from Lake Washington; the real treat was about to blast right past my lens. Just as I start getting frustrated with attempting to snap a shot of Fat Albert skirting past the horizon, the Pratt & Whitney engines rumbled to life and the smoke came on; it was time (finally). The Blue Angels, in their beautifully painted blue and gold Boeing F-18 Hornets, rolled past my camera, its shutter clapping away, and picked up into sky



and made their way towards the Seattle skyline. It's really a momentous feeling to be standing above dozens perched on their truck beds and standing with faces pressed ridiculously close to the chain-link fence, watching and listening to those outstanding jets roar past and eventually give way to the rhythmic tune of car alarms going off up and down the airport alongside screaming children and infants. Ah... music.

What makes Seafair a must for me every year is not only getting to watch some of my favorite aircraft fly and perform for free (since I'm cheap and don't feel like paying \$50 to sit a quarter-mile behind hoards of Seafair-goers cramping the beaches only to see glimpses of darting to-and-fro jets) but to get an otherwise hard to experience close proximity to the performers that I would be greatly restricted from had I gone

to the lake instead. Visiting the Museum of Flight during Seafair, one can easily catch a minute or two with the Blue Angels themselves as well as the other fantastic visiting performers between their trips from the hot side to the Wings Café inside the museum. Of course, veterans of the show know a couple restaurant spots

that make excellent down time hangouts located near the South end of the airport. It also lets me enjoy the company of other aviation enthusiasts rather than hydro-junkies or Seafair-spectators. The people accompanying me on the fence are always kind and welcome to conversation because at the end of the day, we're all



there to see some aircraft fly and make some killer memories. And though the real show takes place over Lake Washington, those who commute to Boeing Field are treated to their own mini-air show as the performers make room in their routines to pass over us fence-dwellers away from the action. And hell, sometimes a break for landing photo is better than a bomb-burst shot any day (in this humble photographers opinion).



Now it's important to understand that I love shooting for this periodical; I really do. When it comes to airshows, I will always remain tied to the Abbotsford International Airshow in Abbotsford, BC because it was my first true show done right and having the liberties, thanks to this magazine, at this year's celebration let me enjoy the best show I've been to in ages. Marking the 100th year of powered-flight in Canada, August 6-9 saw me traveling between the US and Canada every morning and evening for the 47th Abbotsford Airshow. This year's lineup didn't lack in any respect as star-studded performers like World Champion Aerobatics pilot Rob Holland, Bud & Ross Granley, and Dan Buchanan put on spectacular acts (sometimes two at a time. I'm talking to you, Rob & Dan) that competed right next to the highlight military acts including the thrilling Viper West F-16 Team, visiting F-15C Eagles from Elmendorf



AFB, AK, and the power-packed CF-18 Demo. And just as the air over the weekend could be found filled with amazing aircraft, the static display kept spectators just as enthralled with a large fighter row and heavy display where even a Royal Air Force E-3D Sentry made an appearance for the later half of the show while it made its way back to the UK after participating in a recent Red Flag Alaska exercise. Aircraft of all types were wheeled into place around the airport from a large KC-10 Extender to a CAG F/A-18C Hornet to a pair of home-built Ultralight Quickies. Just about everyone and everything turned out to make the Centennial Celebration one of the best across the country.

At the center of the show's attraction, the glorious, gorgeous F-86 Sabre "Hawk One" in its formal Golden Hawks colors made appearances throughout the show, starring in the opening Centennial Flight alongside the equally as beautiful CF-18 Demo Hornet and CT-114 Tutor painted in Golden Centennaires livery and later in the show alongside the CAF Snowbirds and a following solo demo. Piloted by LtCol. Steve Will as the Team Lead & Canadian Astronaut Col. Chris Hadfield, Hawk One made for a remarkable addition to the show and a proud symbol of Canadian Air Force heritage. If you know the Abbotsford Airshow,



then you know that the 1989 show was the one that couldn't be missed; and in my opinion this year was the next best show to see. Though plagued by an expired passport, road construction delays, and regular border traffic, it was worth it all and then some to see this spectacular air show.

The countdown for next year's Abbotsford has already begun! You can find more information at [www.AbbotsfordAirshow.com](http://www.AbbotsfordAirshow.com)





# *EAA AirVenture 2009*

## *In Front of the Crowd in Oshkosh*

*By: Mark Hrutkay*

The EAA Convention held every summer in Oshkosh Wisconsin is the largest aviation event in the world. My father went to an earlier version of it when it was in Rockford, Illinois in 1967. I started going to Oshkosh (as we call it) in the early 1980s. There is simply so much to do and so much to see there that it's actually hard to cover it all. There is an article about it in every aviation magazine in the world, so I need to write something different. Something I've never read about.

As you stand in the crowd, along the runway, you see some people 75 yards in front of you in what amounts to a 50 yard wide ditch taking pictures of the airplanes. They are wearing bright yellow vests that say "EAA Airshow Photographer" on the back and each one is carrying several cameras. That was me this year.

Getting there is a long road. For me it was 45 years of taking pictures of airplanes (OK, that goes back to being a kid, call it three very serious years as an adult) and a lot of time spent writing about it. First you



need to get a Media Pass. In simple terms they are pretty restricted and actually limited to those in the working media, if you are thinking of getting one for recreation purposes, you might as well forget it.

Once you get the pass, you learn that you are allowed in front of the crowd only once during the event. They take about twelve people out and that's all. Multiply that by

seven days of the show and only 84 of 907 media members get to go in front of the crowd. Fortunately, not all of them want to go. They all have different assignments and interests in what they do. So, as soon as you get there, you try and figure out what day you want to shoot based on the airshow schedule. Then get on the shooting schedule.

When your day comes up,

you meet at the Media Center for a briefing. It's just like flying, there is always a briefing. They show us maps and overhead photographs of where you can and can't go. You are pretty limited and have to stay with the group. There is an area around airshow center that is a few hundred yards long you are allowed in.

For safety purposes you are clearly instructed "not



to bunch up", sounds like Sgt Horvath in "Saving Private Ryan" before they hit the beach. Then it sinks in. You are between two taxiways and pretty darn close to one of the runways. If something goes where it shouldn't you may well have to get out of the way of an airplane with little or no warning. The EAA Convention is a pretty safe place, considering the nearly countless num-

ber of aircraft movements, few incidents occur. But when it happens, people in front of the crowd line can really get hurt, or possibly killed. So we stayed apart.

We would be in a drainage area about ten feet deep and fifty yards wide. We were also supposed to stay as low as possible so we were not in the way of the crowd. So you tried to stay close to the bottom of

that area.

I thought a lot about the cameras I'd take. I settled on my Canon 1Ds Mark III with a 300mm F2.8 lens. This camera will shoot a 21MP picture which is something of amazing quality, but you are limited to shooting 5 frames per second with a 9 shot buffer in RAW mode. The other camera was my sports camera, which is a Canon 1D Mark III with the



100-400mm lens. The 1D shoots a 10 MP picture (which is plenty large) and on high speed can fire 10 frames a second with a 30 frame buffer. I was planning on shooting at no more than 8 fps to let the buffer last longer. I also put a 24-105mm lens in a pocket should I need it for some close shots, as well as a few spare memory cards. Well more like a lot of memory cards, say about 100GB of cards. Each frame from the 1Ds is about 24Megs and each one from the 1D is about 11Megs, so cards fill up pretty fast.

They passed out the yellow vests and we got ready to leave. After the briefing, we walked down to the crowd line and went past it about thirty minutes before the show started. As soon as we got there one camera went on the ground and I started shooting take offs of departing aircraft. There was a pretty stiff crosswind, which made for some challenging take offs. I managed to catch a sequence of an airplane doing a groundloop. Nobody was hurt and there was a collapsed gear and bent wingtip. As the plane was being removed with an endloader, the FAA and NTSB came over to see if anyone got pictures. So Mike (my editor who was there) and I got to spend a few minutes with them.



We got their emails and promised to send pictures to them (which I did). Then the show started.

I never really paid very close attention to the skydivers that opened the show with the flag before. As they were coming down, it really occurred to me that they were going to be landing about where we were standing. That made me make a quick lens change to something wider and I got some great shots of them in close.

The show itself was great. The camera /lens combinations were perfect. The shots were as nice as you can possibly get. The planes are all right there in front of you. It was great. Of course it was noisy too. Really loud and I thought about pulling out some earplugs (something you don't think about until you are 50 and of course by that time, it's usually a bit too late). Then I thought that using earplugs wouldn't be a good idea since I'd have problems hearing any safety warnings (like "RUN here comes an airplane"), so I passed on the ear plugs. We didn't have any problems.

How much did I shoot? Not a lot, maybe six thousand frames. I shot a lot relatively slowly with the 1Ds rather than machine-gunning them with the 1D. The ones that look really tight are not enlarged at all but are the pictures at full 100% size. Yes, with the right camera, lens and distance you can see the expressions on the pilot's faces.

The show passed quickly, a lot faster than normal and it was over. Once it was done, we walked back to the crowd, turned in the vests and went back to shooting normal pictures.





*Photo by: Mark Hrutkay*



# EAA AirVenture 2009

## A Week in Pictures

Photos by: Michael Rehbaum



July 27th, 2009 Lt. Col. Jim Hill of VMF-214, The Blacksheep, talks about his experiences during World War II flying with Col. Gregory "Pappy" Boyington.



July 28th, 2009 **Top Center:** A large formation of RV's flies by. **Bottom Center:** Virgin Galactic's WhiteKnightTwo makes it's appearance. It made several passes over the crowd before coming in for a graceful landing.



July 28th, 2009 **Right Hand Side:** Airbus' A380 flies into the 2009 AirVenture. The A 380 made a number of flights past the large crowd before making a short landing showing off the abilities of the A-380. The bottom picture clearly shows it's much talked about hard landing that produced a large number of internet rumors.







**July 28th, 2009** Top: Rob Holland flies past a parachutist during the opening ceremonies for Tuesday's air show. With an air show each and every day of AirVenture it certainly gives one a lot to look at in the skies above Oshkosh!

**Bottom Left:** Amanda Younkin-Franklin prepares for her wing walking act with pilot/husband Kyle Franklin. Their pirate themed show certainly gave the crowd quite a show.

**Bottom Right:** The United States Air Force Heritage Flight on Wednesday featured a Korean War era F-86, a modern A-10 Thunderbolt and a World War II ear P-51D.



**July 29th, 2009** Wednesday offered quite an air show line up!  
**Top Left:** The A-380's tale towers over Aeroshell Square.  
 Top Right: Erickson Skycrane's S-64 Skycrane "Elvis" put on quite a display of what it can do. Taking off and dropping its 9500 liter load of water and then running out to the lake and returning with another 9500 liter load of water incredibly quickly. Seeing this large helicopter fly so quickly and drop so much water really helped to reinforce why Erickson Skycrane has such a great reputation.  
 Bottom: P-51D Geraldine taxi's in the warbird area preparing for a flight.







July 29th, 2009 **Above:** Michael Goulian races a Ford Mustang. It's not often at an air show that you see this kind of formation! Ford was present all over AirVenture 2009 due to their assistance in sponsoring part of the event. **Top Left:** Paul Bowen captures an image of Ron Fagen & his wife in front of their P-40E **Top Right:** Bob Hoover may not fly at AirVenture any longer, but he can still attract a crowd when he speaks! **Center Left:** Wednesday's show also featured the National Anthem of the United States and a Parachute jump with a U.S. Flag by the Liberty Parachute Team. **Center Right:** Julie Clark wows the crowd with her Air Force One themed T-38 Mentor. Julie was a regular performer at this years AirVenture. Her red white and blue smoke painted quite a line in the skies over Oshkosh. **Bottom:** Chuck Aaron, the pilot of the Red Bull BO 105 CBS helicopter, watches as Bob Carlton sails past in his PBS TJ-100 powered Super Salto Sail Plane. Watching Bob "boom and zoom" in a sail plane is quite a thrill. Well okay so it's not quite "booming and zooming," but it's as close as a sail plane will ever come!







**July 31st, 2009 Top:** German World War II “Experten” Günther Rall signs autographs and copies of his book “My Log Book”. Earlier in the Day Gunther spoke about his long aviation career that began in the German Luftwaffe of World War II and ran into the 1970’s with the West German Luftwaffe. With 275 Victories in World War II Günther Rall is the high scoring living ace and the third highest scoring ace of all time.

**Bottom:** Two “Bombshells” of Mybombshells.com pose with two re-enactors in front of Bob Baker’s P-51D “Little Rebel.”



**July 31st, 2009** With the airshow in full swing a young fan dreams of flying his own Corsair.



**July 31st, 2009 Top:** Gene Soucy in ShowCat and Teresa Stokes thrill the crowd with their wing walking act.

**Bottom:** Fighters & Legends LLC’s F4U-5N lands after participating in the air show on the 31st.





August 2nd, 2009

**This Page:** Late Sunday one of the few remaining warbirds sits waiting for its return flight home.



**August 2nd, 2009 Top Left & Right:** Bill and Scott Yoak speak in the warbirds square about their P-51D "Quicksilver." Bill spoke about the symbolism found in the paint scheme Quicksilver carries and his desire to remind American's of the sacrifices America's veterans have undertaken to protect freedom and democracy. Scott told about his rise to being the youngest (at the time) P-51 qualified pilot in the U.S. **Center Left:** Scott Yoak flies his P-51 display during the air show. **Center Right:** The Commemorative Air Forces' freshly completed P-51C "Red Tail" flies again. This P-51C is painted to honor the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II and it also serves to honor Don Hinz who lost his life in this aircraft in 2004.



**Opposite Page Bottom Left:** The Misty Blues Skydiving Team prepare for their jump on Sunday.

**Opposite Page Bottom Right:** The grand prize winner of the Young Eagle Raffle for the 2009 AirVenture, Marjorie Gjesdal of Edmonton, Canada, sits in her new 2010 Ford Mustang GT convertible.





Left Bottom: Sean Tucker cuts the third of three Ribbons in the Oracle Challenger.

This Page: The sun sets on the final day of AirVenture 2009.



*Photos by: Michael Rehbaum*



# Reports from the Field

## August 2009

### Thunder Over Michigan, Ypsilanti, Michigan

By: Michael Rehbaum

Every year the Thunder Over Michigan air show features a theme to tie all of the elements of the show together. This year's theme was a salute to the aircraft of Vietnam. The online buzz was somewhat negative for this year's show due in part to the fact that the theme was not based around a World War II warbird.

The Yankee Air Museum went to great lengths to insure that even with a different type of theme than they usually have they still produced a fantastic show. The Vietnam theme allowed for a great number of unique aircraft to appear at the show. It also allowed for a second re-enactment. Traditionally Thunder features a re-enactment "battle" between Allied and German forces. This re-enactment has been a highlight of the show. This year the folks at Yankee Air Museum also put together a Vietnam themed re-enactment "battle" that even featured flights in and out



David Jacobson



Ryan Orshinsky



Michael Rehbaum

of the battle zone with UH-1's and battle field flybys of Cessna O-2's.

The Vietnam theme also brought out The Colling Foundation's F-4D Phantom II. The sight of the F-4 and Will Ward in his Mig 17F flying in a mock dog fight was quite a site to behold.

Even though this year had a Vietnam theme and brought numerous C-130's to the field for static display, warbirds were certainly present. The Canadian Russel Group and Vintage wings over Canada both brought a large number of their aircraft to the show. The Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum also brought their Avro Lancaster. This allowed for a unique sight, five Canadian owned war birds flying in formation over the field during the air show.

The show was topped off by a performance of the United States Navy's Blue Angels. Any show that has "The Blues" is one that is going to attract a crowd, and this show was certainly no exception. Adding "The Blues" gave the 2009 Thunder Over Michigan a nice assortment of aircraft from the 1940's all the way to the present day.

2009 was another successful year for Thunder Over Michigan. One can only wait now for what next years theme will be!



Reports from the Field



David Jacobson



Ryan Grantonic



Ryan Sundheimer



Ryan Orshinsky



Michael Rehbaum



Ryan Grantonic



Reports from the Field



Michael Rehbaum



Michael Rehbaum



Michael Rehbaum



Michael Rehbaum



Michael Rehbaum



Michael Rehbaum



Michael Rehbaum



Michael Rehbaum

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Reports from the Field



Ryan Orshinsky



Ryan Sundheimer



David Jacobson



Michael Rehbaum



Michael Rehbaum



*Reports from the Field*  
*The Milwaukee Air & Water Show, Milwaukee, WI*

*Photos By: David Jacobson*





*Reports from the Field*  
*EAA AirVenture, Oshkosh, WI*



Ryan Sundheimer



David Jacobson



Mark Hrutkay



Michael Rehbaum





Ryan Sundheimer



David Jacobson



Mark Hrutkay



Ryan Sundheimer



Aaron Haase



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Ryan Sundheimer



Michael Rehbaum



Michael Rehbaum



Ryan Sundheimer



Mark Hrutkay





David Jacobson



David Jacobson



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Mark Hrutkay



Ryan Sundheimer



Aaron Haase



Mark Hrutkay



Ryan Sundheimer



David Jacobson



Mark Hrutkay



Ryan Sundheimer



David Jacobson



# Reports from the Field

## Thunder Over the Valley, Youngstown, OH

By: William Derrickson & Brandon Marchek

Over 65,000 people were in attendance at the Youngstown Air Reserve Station, for their first air show in twenty-three years. With most of the staff from the previous show now retired, concerns quickly arose through Internet forums and other sources about the organization of the show. The main concern was if this small, rural Ohio airport could handle the increased traffic generated by an air show headlined by the United States Air Force Thunderbirds. Limited parking around the airport was also a potential problem. Air show officials attempted to handle the problem by releasing a limited number of free "tickets" to the public. All the tickets were distributed within the first few hours of release. In order to aide in the parking situation, spectators were provided maps through the air show website, directing them to their corresponding satellite parking locations around the Youngstown area. Because of the overwhelming response to

the first ticket release, many were unable to get a hold of tickets. Air show officials then decided to release a second amount of tickets during the week leading up to the show to accommodate those people.

All of the concerns were quickly forgotten during the morning of day one when traffic and parking was not an issue. In fact the parking and traffic flow at this air show was one of the most efficient that we've seen. Much credit is due to the 910th Airlift Wing for a job well done.

In order to accommodate spectators who bussed in from satellite parking locations, opening ceremonies were scheduled for noon. For those who were able to make it to the gates when they opened at 9AM, pre-ceremony entertainment included R/C demonstrations and a warbird demonstration. The Yankee Air Museum provided the aircraft for the impressive warbird



Brandon Marchek

parade which included a B-17, B-25, P-51, DC-3, PV-2, C-123, OV-10 and an O-2.

Following the Golden Knight's flag drop and national anthem, air show performers took to the sky. The only damper, pardon the pun, was the weather on Saturday. Scattered showers sprinkled the area, but did not stop any of the performers from putting on their routines. Bill Leff's amazing T-6 demo, an impressive Corsair demo, and Manfred Radius's graceful glider demo provided the civilian portion of the flying entertainment. Representing the United States Army, the Golden Knight's put on a stunning display of precision parachuting. Being that the show was held on an Air Force Reserve base, the rest of the entertainment was provided by the United States Air Force. The United States Air Force Academy's Wings of Blue performed a variety of free fall parachute jumps. The large but maneuverable C-17 demo from March Air Force base awed the crowd.

The host unit, 910th Airlift Wing, demonstrated its C-130's precision para-dropping capability. And the Air Force Reserve's jet car blazed down the runway.

The Strike Eagle Demo Team lit up the skies over Youngstown with their after-burners as well. We were lucky enough to meet the team and their pilots, Capt. Phil "Ritz" Smith and Capt. John "Gizmo" Cox at their aircraft on Saturday following their performance. We quickly learned that "Ritz", "Gizmo", and their crew are as impressive as the high performance jets they fly and maintain.

The headliners of the show, the United States Air Force Thunderbirds, flew the final act of each day. The Thunderbirds flew despite the rain on Saturday. The crowd in Youngstown was amazed by their precise high performance flying. As usual these ultimate professionals did not disappoint.

The 2009 Thunder Over the Valley Air Show turned out to be a success. This air show is going to be a bi-annual event and should be back in Youngstown, Ohio in two years.





Brandon Marchek



Brandon Marchek



William Derrickson



William Derrickson



Brandon Marchek



Brandon Marchek



William Derrickson



William Derrickson



Brandon Marchek



Brandon Marchek



William Derrickson



William Derrickson



*Reports from the Field*  
*Oakland County International Airport Open House,*  
*Waterford, MI*  
*Photos By: Ryan Sundheimer*





*Reports from the Field*  
*Thunder Over the Boardwalk, Atlantic City, NJ*



Steven King



Chris Adolor



Chris Brennan





Joe Osciak



Chris Brennan



Chris Adolor



Steven King



Joe Osciak



Steven King



Joe Osciak



Chris Adolor





Joe Osciak



Joe Osciak



Steven King



Chris Adolor



Chris Adolor



Steven King