

# AirshowStuff

*Magazine*



## **OFF SEASON SPECIAL!**

*Jenny's Journal - Comedy On The Wing*  
*Winter Flight Training*  
*Off Season Survival Guide*

- *Airshow News*
- *Spotting*
- *Museums*
- *Photography*
- *Flight Simulator*

February 2010

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## Cover Photo

The F-16 and F-86 is one of the many Heritage Flight formations possible in Flight Simulator. Screenshot by Aaron Haase. For more, see page 26.

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## 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](mailto: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!



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.



## 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](mailto:RS@AirshowStuff.com)  
We'd love to have you!

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## Thanks to those who contributed to this issue!

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Tyson Rininger

## Comedy on the Wing

Article by Jenny Forsythe - American Barnstormer Wingwalking Team

Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.... NO, NO, NO – I'm not getting married, but this old saying seemed appropriate to go with our newest theme for our solo wing walk act. Everyone's familiar with Double Trouble, so I thought I'd spend a little time talking about our team's other spectacular act which is getting a spunky new theme this year.

Something old – the true barnstormer spirit. Many of the pioneers in wing walking and airshows used props to enhance their acts. In the case of Jessie Woods and the Flying Aces, they

actually deployed live animals, like stray cats with parachutes and chickens, from their aircraft for the crowd to catch upon their landing. For obvious reasons, we chose to stay away from critter props, but we thought the general idea of using a prop to enhance the act would be a great way to honor this tradition of old.

Something new – the comedy routine. Our team has never gone the way of a comedy act before, so this is certainly something new to us. With the help of a narrator armed with some quick-witted one-liners and some prearranged voice-overs from me, we believe

this act will rival the comedy skits currently on the circuit.

Something borrowed – right from the likes of Waldo Pepper. While our act has a much happier ending, we decided to play up the scene from this very popular flying flick. I am often asked if I have ever encountered a costume malfunction while flying, so I figured, why not give the crowd what they're looking for... a girl flying between the wings at the wingtip who loses a bit of clothing in the breeze.

Something blue – with some gold to draw contrast. Yep, the new costume includes a blue and

gold skirt that will be highly visible as it blows in the wind.

The premise of our comedy act is that I have a new skirt I want to try out and I'm certain it will fly just fine on the wing. As the narrator is explaining to the crowd just how much focus it takes to move about the wings of the plane, everyone gets a real-life example of that as my skirt takes a flight of its own without my realizing it. Thus, I continue on with the lower wing routine until I hit the cockpit before ascending to the top rack. Once in the cockpit, I – a very modest woman as you all know - figure out I've been showing off my underwear to everyone! Needless to say, it will take some encouragement from the crowd to get me up to that top wing to finish the performance in my bright pink bloomers.

Mike Ryerson



As always, this act includes all the favorite maneuvers – the wingtip roll and the daring javelin hang (both which are currently unique to our team), plus the inverted pass and other aerobatics. And, I'll still be hitting all four locations on the plane – javelin,

N-strut, top wing, and over the cockpit. Walt and I look forward to debuting this new twist to our performance this year and hope to see you at a show soon!

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



# Pilot In Command

## A Winter of Flight Training

Article and Photos  
by Jonathan Roberts



Degree in Fixed Wing Flight Technology, which, when completed, students will earn a private pilot certificate, instrument rating, and commercial rating.

Of course, I must say that learning how to fly is very fun, and after spending many hours on Microsoft Flight Simulator, it's actually very easy. My introductory flight didn't seem that way at first. It was cloudy and windy, which made it a bumpy ride. I flew the plane a little bit while nearly breaking the yoke off of the control panel with my death grip, trying to keep the plane steady in the wind. But after more time in flight and a few calm weather days, I have become much more comfortable flying the airplane. I eventually became able to take off and land the airplane myself, and my instructor is convinced that I have had previous flight training because of how much I know from Flight Sim. I suppose I'm either a natural at flying, or it's just beginner's luck.

If you're interested in pursuing a private pilot certificate for fun, or a commercial rating for a career, go talk to flight instructors at several schools in your area for more information. It's very important that you find a school with a staff that is comfortable to you so that your training is much more relaxed and fun. Once you have found a compatible school, you will need to find a compatible FAA medical examiner. They will give you a physical exam to ensure that you are healthy enough to fly airplanes. From then on, things

will start getting a little expensive. The books you will need for the private pilot certificate course can be around \$270 or more. Also, every school will have different rental rates for different training airplanes. For instance, my school charges \$75 per flight hour for a Cessna 152. Some schools will have an additional charge for the instructor. Then you just go out and fly! Some maneuvers will be easy to do, while others will take time to learn. The best advice to give is to always study the books. Flying is the fun part, obviously, but in order to pass the oral and written exams, knowl-

edge is the key. These exams that the FAA gives before the check-ride are over \$100 to take, so it's best to pass everything the first time. My instructors advise that the time spent for flight school should be 10% flying and 90% knowledge. So, for every hour up in an airplane, that's nine hours in the books!

Flight school is definitely a fun thing to do, but it's also very expensive. I encourage anyone who is financially able and has a dream to fly to take part in flight school. It is very rewarding and definitely something to do in the airshow offseason!



While at an airshow, one can only imagine how much fun those pilots are having when they are zooming and tumbling around in the sky. Most people do not get an opportunity to experience the great thrills that they do on a daily basis, but if you'd like to get started in that direction and join them up there, you need to

start at the same place they did – flight school. Whether they're military or civilian, they all started somewhere. When the airshow season is over and you are having withdrawals of afterburners, pyrotechnics, smoke oil, and that great smell of jet fuel, one great way to keep yourself occupied is go to flight school.

There are many flight schools all over the country that teach people the great art of flying. I'm currently taking flight lessons at the Cullman County Airport (K3A1) in Vinemont, Alabama. They work in conjunction with Wallace State Community College in Hanceville, AL to give college credit towards an Associates

# The Airshow Stuff

## Off Season

### Survival Guide

Part of being an airshow junkie is the dreaded off season. What is one to do when the summer thunder fades to the winter doldrums? Each year the off season seems to drag on longer than it ever has before! But while airshow action may be hibernating, there are still plenty of aviation and photography related things to keep you occupied and perhaps set you up for a better season once it finally arrives. Here we've compiled some of our favorite off season time fillers for you to try out the next time you yearn for jet noise.

# 15 Things To Do In The Offseason

Article by Ryan Sundheimer

**1 Go For a Plane Ride**  
Feed your airplane hunger with a ride in one! Many small airports offer sightseeing or discovery flights for prices lower than the normal hourly rate. Get yourself some air time, and if you really enjoy it, you could always move on to number six.

**2 Clean Your Sensor**  
A tiny speck of dust on your sensor could ruin a masterpiece. Take advantage of the downtime to learn how to clean it yourself, or have it cleaned professionally at a local camera shop or by your manufacturer.

**3 Learn Photoshop**  
Editing photos has become a major aspect of photography in this digital age. Whether you're shaky on the basics or looking for advanced techniques, you should see about a Photoshop or editing class in your area.

**4 Get a Scanner**  
One mark of a seasoned airshow junkie is the radio scanner clipped to the fence in front of them. Scanners not only allow you to listen to the pilots, they can key you in on what's happening next so you can be one step ahead of everyone else!

**5 Go Spotting**  
A trip to the airport can be just as fun when there is no airshow. Look online for a local spotting group or just find a nice place to watch and take pictures from. It is rarely against the law to spot, but bring ID and a friendly attitude just in case someone asks. See page 48.

**6 Learn to Fly**  
If you've ever had the urge to be a pilot, the off season is a great time to go for it! Head to the local flight school and ask about training. It's easier than you think! See page 8.



William Derrickson



10

**12 Re-Edit Old Photos**  
 You're constantly learning new editing techniques, especially if you do number three on this list. Use the off season to revisit some of your best old photos and give them a fresh touch up with all of the new things you can do. You just may find some gems you didn't realize you had!

**13 Restore History**  
 Chances are, there is a warbird or vintage plane restoration group near you. Investing some time will be well worth it when you see her take to the skies once again! As an added bonus, you may be able to hitch a ride to a show someday, or perhaps get access to future flight experience rides and photo ops.



13

Ryan Orshinsky

**14 Stay in the Loop**  
 Join an airshow message board like AirshowBuzz to stay in touch with friends. Forums are also the best place to stay updated on the latest schedules and show info, which you can use to...

**15 Plan For Next Year**  
 Let's just face it, the real thing to do during the off season is think about next year! Think about what shows you want to go to, and try to add one you've never been to before!

**7 Start a Website**  
 If you're looking for a way to increase your exposure and make a name for yourself, an online gallery is a must. Web sites are getting cheaper and easier to make. It's even easier to use services like Flickr, Webshots, and Smugmug, which offer free accounts.

**8 Explore the Virtual Skies**  
 There are tons of Flight Simulator programs out there just waiting to be played. Dogfight with the computer, or make some online friends. Together you can create virtual airshows, virtual airlines, or just cruise around together. See page 26.

**9 Find a New Subject**  
 There are more things to take photos of than just planes! Wildlife, landscapes, and portraits are all popular. It's a great chance to improve your skills and expand your portfolio! See page 20.

**10 Visit a Museum**  
 There are tons of aviation museums around the country with all sorts of rare aircraft. Find one in your area, or set up a longer trip to a landmark museum such as the National Air and Space Museum or the National Museum of the USAF. See page 36.

**11 Volunteer**  
 While you're at the museum, offer to help out! Use your aviation knowledge and free time in the off season to volunteer as a tour guide and help promote aviation.



Ryan Sundheimer

9



8

Ryan Sundheimer

## Team MS760

Article and Photos  
by Aaron Haase

2010 will mark the first year of a new aerial jet warbird demonstration team. Two well-known pilots will be leading this team, Mr. Dale Snodgrass and Mr. Jerry Kerby. These two pilots will be flying the Morane-Saulnier MS-760. It is a twin-engine, light jet built in France in 1959. It was a short lived project because of the release of the American made Learjet. However several of these jets have made it to the United States and into private hands. The show will consist of formation aerobatic maneuvers and solo passes.

Pilot Dale Snodgrass is the highest flight-time F-14 Tomcat pilot in the world. He is known for his impressive Tomcat demo and his spectacular low passes in aircraft such as the P-51 and the F-86 Sabre. His performances are covered by air shows around the



United States. Not only is he a skilled solo pilot but he is also a great formation pilot and he has flown in the U.S. Navy Legacy flight and USAF Heritage Flight.

Jerry Kerby is a former F-15 pilot and then became the commander of the 82nd ATRS QF-4E Phantom squadron at Tyndall AFB, FL and was the first QF-4E pilot selected into the United States Air Force Heritage Flight program. Currently he is a pilot with the Vintage Thunderbird T-33 act and

of the Collings Foundation F-4D Phantom. Joining the team as well is Ms. L.M. Sawyer. She will be the team's events coordinator and narrator. She currently narrates the Collings Foundation F-4D Phantom demo and the Vintage Thunderbird T-33 demo.

If you would like to acquire these two veteran air show pilots and their routine, you can contact the team at their website at:

[www.TeamMS760.com](http://www.TeamMS760.com)





# Heritage and Legacy Flights Lose Funding

Article by Chad Grosvenor

Once again, the rough economy has taken a toll on the air show community. The USAF Heritage and US Navy Legacy Flights will no longer be funded by their respective military branches. However, that doesn't mean the end of these breathtaking flights. They will still be performed, but the air shows and pilots will have to provide the funding. Unfortunately, these budget cuts will result in less Heritage and Legacy Flights.

The USAF will continue to sanction the Heritage Flight with the approved civilian pilots. On the other hand, civilian costs associated with the inclusion of the



Ryan Sundheimer

Heritage Flight will now be an event expenditure. Air shows assigned a USAF demo team will be accountable for the securing and contracting of an approved civilian pilot, should they wish to include the Heritage Flight as part of their 2010 show. Consequently, there will more than likely be less

three and four ship Heritage and Legacy Flights.

The US Navy Legacy Flight Association issued a statement saying essentially the same thing that the USAF Heritage Flight said. However, they went on to say that they are fairly confident the Navy will be able to partially fund the



Anthony Richards

Legacy Flight for the Centennial of Naval Aviation in 2011. The USAF said nothing about the future of the Heritage Flight beyond 2010.

When asked about this subject, Brett Krause, organizer of the Prairie Air Show, said, "I think that the plan to discontinue funding of Heritage and Legacy flights will definitely have an impact on the small- to mid-sized shows. We

fall into the second category and it will certainly have an impact on Prairie Air Show, as it will force us to use more of our allocated performer budget to enhance a military act."

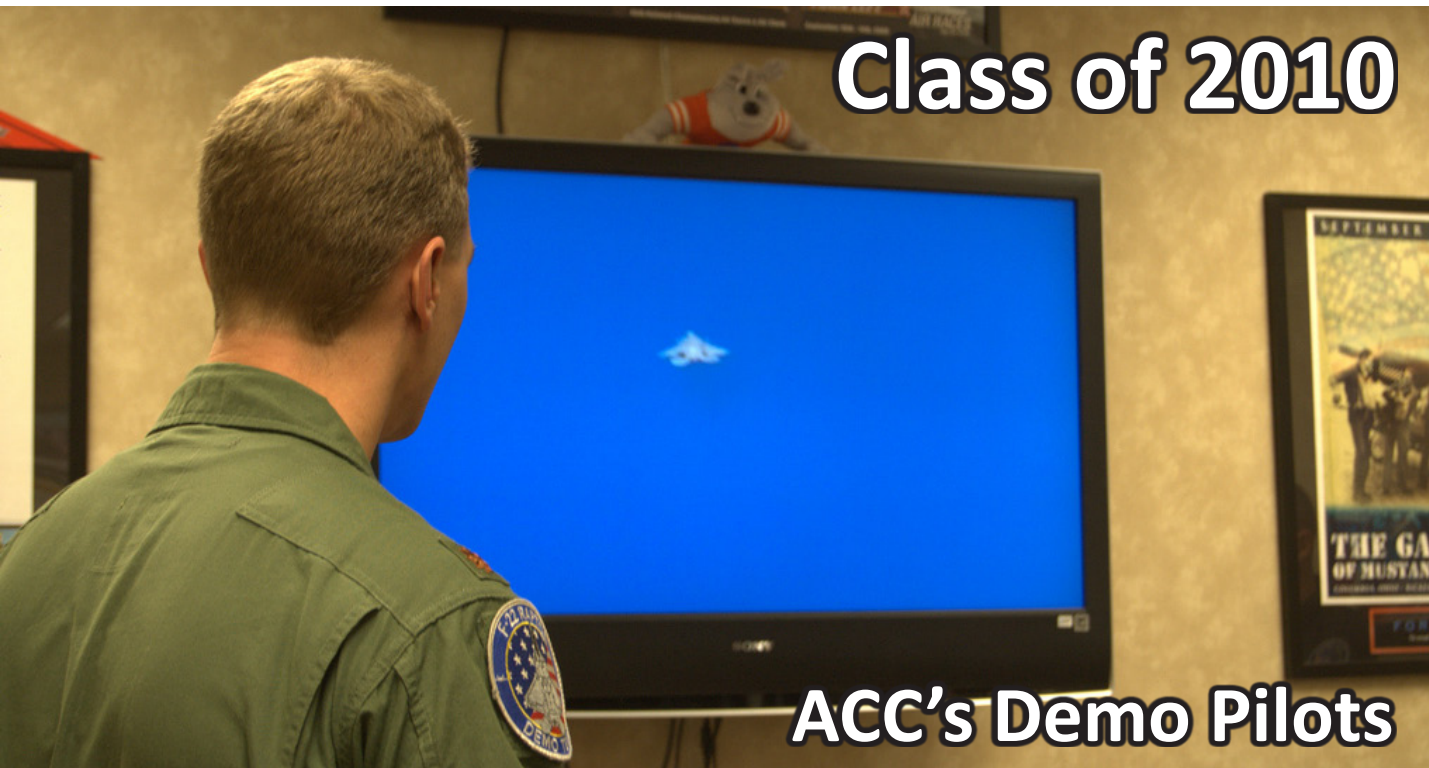
"Based on the ICAS survey, some 55% of the people attending air shows want to see military aircraft and the Heritage and Legacy programs help enhance the expe-

rience. We do plan on trying to fund the programs as long as we get the assets assigned to us by ACC and CHINFO and will look for additional sponsorship funding to help defray the cost." he went on to say. This isn't the best news for the air show community, but hopefully there will be substantial funding for these powerful and emotional flights.

Anthony Richards



Anthony Richards



# Class of 2010

## ACC's Demo Pilots

Article and Photos by Ricky Matthews

It's a new year and that means new faces for some of the ACC demonstration teams. Capt Phil "Ritz" Smith left the F-15 Strike Eagle Demo Team and handed command over to Major Mike "Cash" Maeder. Cash served as a safety observer for the team in 2009. Joining Cash at the controls of the Strike Eagle is returning Weapons Officer Captain John "Gizmo" Cox.

The A-10 West Coast Demo Team out of Davis Monthan AFB, AZ also has a new pilot this year. Capt. Joe "RIFLE" Shetterly has been selected to fly the demo for this year. Capt. Ryan "Rider"

Corrigan has been selected as the pilot for Viper East as well. Look for them at a show near you in 2010!

Remaining with their teams this year is Major David "Zeke" Skalicky and the F-22 Demo Team, Major David "Booster" Graham with Viper West and Capt. Johnnie "Dusty" Green with the A-10 East Coast Demo Team. In addition to the single ship teams, the F-4s will continue to perform in Heritage Flights across the country with Lt. Col. Gregory "Bluto" Blount from Tyndall AFB, FL and Lt. Col. Brent "Dizzy" Gillespie from Holloman AFB, NM at the controls.



# Wildlife

Article by Chad Grosvenor

I believe one of the best ways to keep your photography skills sharp in the winter is to photograph wildlife—mostly birds, considering they’re the next best thing to aircraft when it comes to flying. A lot of airshow photographers photograph wildlife in the off season.

Winter in the Midwest brings thousands of bald eagles migrating from the northern United States and Canada to keep up with the fish who move south searching for open water as the rivers and lakes freeze over. Bald eagles are some of the coolest subjects to photograph because of their majestic looks. There’s a reason they’re our national symbol! Bald eagles stand about three feet tall, have a wingspan of up to seven and a half feet, and weigh ten to fourteen pounds.

Taking pictures of bald eagles can help you sharpen your panning and tracking skills and it’s just another subject to photograph when you don’t have airshows. Even if you’re not a photographer, I would encourage you to get out and enjoy this magnificent animal. There’s no other feeling like witnessing a bald eagle swoop down to grab a fish with its talons, and capturing that moment with a photograph is even better!



Chad Grosvenor



David Jacobson



David Jacobson



Chad Grosvenor



David Jacobson



Chad Grosvenor

David Jacobson



## Watercraft

Article and Photos by  
Mark Kolanowski

While planes may be my passion, favorite subject, and hopefully eventually my career, my travels have also included plenty of boats and ships which present a great photographic opportunity, though it is quite a bit different than what us airshow types are used to.

As airshow fans, we are used to relatively small aircraft performing violent changes of direction at high speeds. Yes there is the occasional flyby of a cargo aircraft or helicopter that slows things down, but for the most part our subjects are moving at 150 knots or more. Ship spotting is a completely different animal, a

massive slow moving object that is slowly changing direction if at all.

In our airshow viewing and photography, we have a blink and you'll miss it type of subject, demanding extremely high shutter speeds and wide open apertures. While those settings work great for airshows, the narrow depth of field will ensure that at least some of the ship will be out of focus. When spotting ships or boats, try going with a higher aperture setting (at least f11-f16 range). Since most ships lumber along at around 20 knots at full speed (and in ports where they are easiest to shoot it's often closer to 5 knots) you can use a much lower shutter speed (you don't necessarily need any faster than 1/125). Another thing to consider would be

putting your camera in single shot mode, as in the time I would shoot 25 shots at an airshow or a plane spotting trip, the ship has probably moved a grand total of 3 feet! It is all too easy to fill up a CF card on one or two ships when you are firing off shots like you would at say a Thunderbird sneak pass. Finally, bring lenses with as wide of a range of zoom as practical (up to about 300mm maximum) to allow for getting the entire vessel at close range, or picking out the name or captain from half a mile out.

A few other important things to consider would be your shooting location/platform and legal issues. Being a lifelong boater and cruiser, I generally shoot from a boat or cruise ship, but I also enjoy shooting from shore. When



shooting from shore, try to pick a location with good sightlines, preferably with no high fence or pilings. Keep lighting conditions in mind, as the sun is your only hope of getting proper lighting on an object three football fields long. If shooting from a boat, keep in mind that there is a minimum distance you must stay from the ships, and bump up your shutter speed if possible to minimize the effects of vibration and waves. I learned the "keep your distance" part the hard way at an offshore race last summer, having ended up in a (too shallow) practice lane in the path of a speedboat doing in excess of 150 miles per hour. This is not so much the danger with ships, but you still need to respect the size and power of these vessels. At speed a ship can take a mile or more to stop, and evasive action isn't quite as easy as with a smaller boat. In channels and harbors, ships generally have the right of way at all times. Also, many locations around ports are restricted and high security areas, so tread lightly and listen to/comply with any police officers. Just like out at the airports,

they are just doing their jobs and often have to check out a person that was called in and will be friendly. If you are shooting from private property, make sure you have permission to be there!

A few locations I've been that offer great opportunities for this kind of photography would be Metro Beach in Clinton Township, Michigan (boats and extremely small yachts), anywhere on the water in downtown Detroit (boats and commercial ships, yes you can go there even when there is no air race), St. Thomas, St. Maarten, Cozumel in the Caribbean as well as Miami and Ft. Lauderdale stateside are great for cruise ships and yachts. I have never had the chance to do any naval spotting, so you're on your own as far as the grey ships go.

In short, ship spotting is a great change of pace for airshow types like us, giving our shutters a bit of a rest and our necks a break. You will be getting spectacular results in no time provided the lighting is good, and is a great way to expand your portfolio without having to deal with little kids who don't smile.

# The Zoo

Article and Photos by  
Ryan Sundheimer

It may not seem like it, but the winter is the best time for a trip to the zoo, and for one simple reason - animal activity! During the hot days of summer, the animals try to keep cool by hiding in the shade and moving as little as possible. Once winter rolls around though, they come to life.

I was surprised when I found out my local Detroit Zoo was even open in the middle of February, but I had a free day so I put my membership to good use and went. I wasn't surprised to find I was one of about ten people in the entire place, but that was

great because there was no one to get in the way. Many of the animals were indoors, but the main draws such as the lions, tigers, and bears were all still visible outside. In fact, they were trotting around their exhibits and playing! The lions even started to roar. It was the first time I've seen them do anything but sleep.

The indoor exhibits weren't great for pictures, but they did put you up close to the animals that are usually so far away. They were a nice break from the cold, and a nice chance to warm up my shutter finger.

If you're looking for something to do this winter, try out your local zoo! It really is the best time to go.



## Multiplayer

Article and Screenshots  
by Ryan Sundheimer

No matter how cold it is outside, it's always good flying weather on your computer! My number one winter hobby is Microsoft Flight Simulator. I have had a copy of it for most of my life, but only in recent years have I discovered the joys of flying online with my other airshow friends. Many people have Flight Sim on their computer, but few of them ever take it into multiplayer, which is a shame.

We play Flight Sim together so much that I even run our own multiplayer server. It's open to everyone and connects FS2002,



FS2004, and FSX users together in one session. Most of the time we free fly, going to a random airport and making up stuff as we go. Some of us spend a lot of time flying formation in military aircraft and warbirds, and some others spend their time perfecting aerobatic routines. Sometimes we change up the pace a bit and fly as a group to one of the aircraft carriers off shore. With the help of some program trickery, these carriers are fully capable of arrested landings and catapult takeoffs.

Occasionally we organize group events to bring everyone together. Our favorite event is, fittingly enough, a virtual airshow. We organize it much like a real show. We pick an airport and lay out the showline and crowd area from an overhead shot. People

sign up for what acts they want to fly so that everyone can get the same add-on aircraft. In the days leading up to the show, the server is busy with people practicing. On the day of the show, everyone signs in at the same time and we take turns flying our acts. The people who aren't flying sit

in the 'crowd' in a specially made aircraft model - a guy in a lounge chair.

The airshow can have any kind of act you'd see at a real one, from hardcore aerobatics to warbird parades to military demos. We have even devised a way to jump out of another persons air-

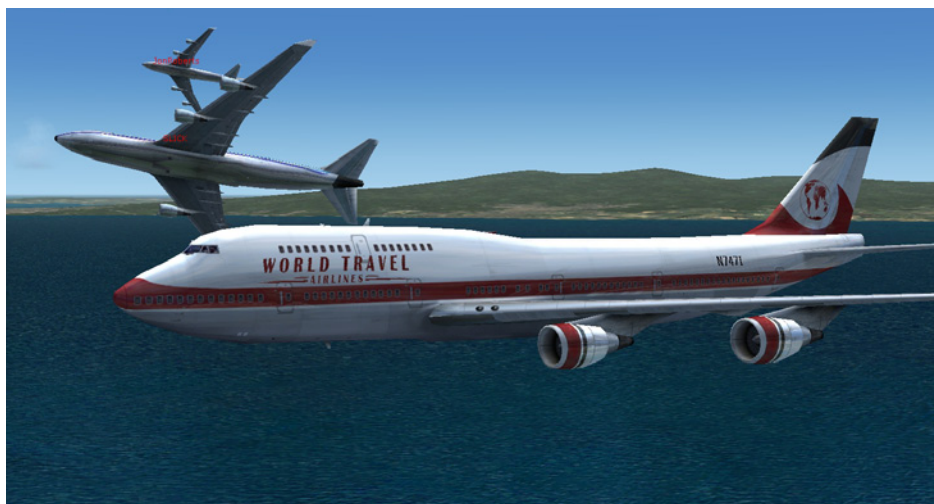


craft, allowing for mass parachute jumps.

The real fun with virtual airshows is that there are almost no limits. While some people choose to replicate real world routines, including the actual music and narration scripts, others just come up with acts we can only dream of, such as a three ship Piper Cub semi-aerobatic team or the USMC Generation Flight, a Harrier and a Corsair in formation. We even put together a five ship A-1 Skyraider team similar to the Blue Angels or Thunderbirds!

Sometimes the best acts are completely spur of the moment. At one show, a planned two ship Extra formation act turned into an eight aircraft melee in the sky, plus a jet truck on the ground.

Another event we like to hold is the good old fly-in. Everyone starts at their local airport and flies their way to a designated



spot, sometimes meeting up along the way. Once we get there we fly mass formations and sometimes have a short impromptu airshow. We often have fly-ins for major sporting events like the Super Bowl, and we perform our own flyover of the stadium to the

national anthem, then talk about the game through our headsets.

We also hold mock dogfights and military operations on occasion. There is no way to actually shoot another player in MSFS, but we have worked out a system using screenshots to verify kills.

Some times we change

At times when we don't know what to fly, we fly the hop list, a sequence of short preplanned flights programmed into the server so it can track your progress. Currently our hoplist is an around the world adventure, starting in the Phillipines, running up across the Bering Strait and down the Rockies into western Mexico. Eventually it will lead back to the starting point after visiting nearly every corner of the world! The hop list is great for formation practice and just hanging out while on a leisurely flight.

Come join us sometime! All you have to do is open up the multiplayer screen and type in our IP. We'll be glad to help you start your online experience.



# Virtual Airlines

Article by Mark Kolanowski

Not long after switching to FSX, I was longing for a little bit more from my simulator experience. Sure it was cool to fly around and complete the missions, but the lack of human interaction and a real goal became a bit of a problem at times. After trying a few other virtual airlines, I came across a small, fictional DTW based carrier with a nice website describing all aspects of the airline (I thought it was real at first!), and signed up right away. Since that time I have had the pleasure of sharing the green skies with some of the most talented pilots in the simming community, and have grown from a new Dash 8 pilot to a A330 ATP Captain with over 350 hours and growing from a small fleet of regionals and classic 737s to a larger international airline with an ever growing route network.

Realistic, Innovative, Professional: The motto of MetroAir holds true in every staff member and pilot from the CEO down to the newhire taking a green and grey Q200 out for the first time. Founded in late 2005, MetroAir's aim was to revolutionize the virtual airline world by starting small and operating in a realistic virtual economic environment. This policy allows members (nearly 140 pilots as of this writing) to not only be a part of the flying aspect of



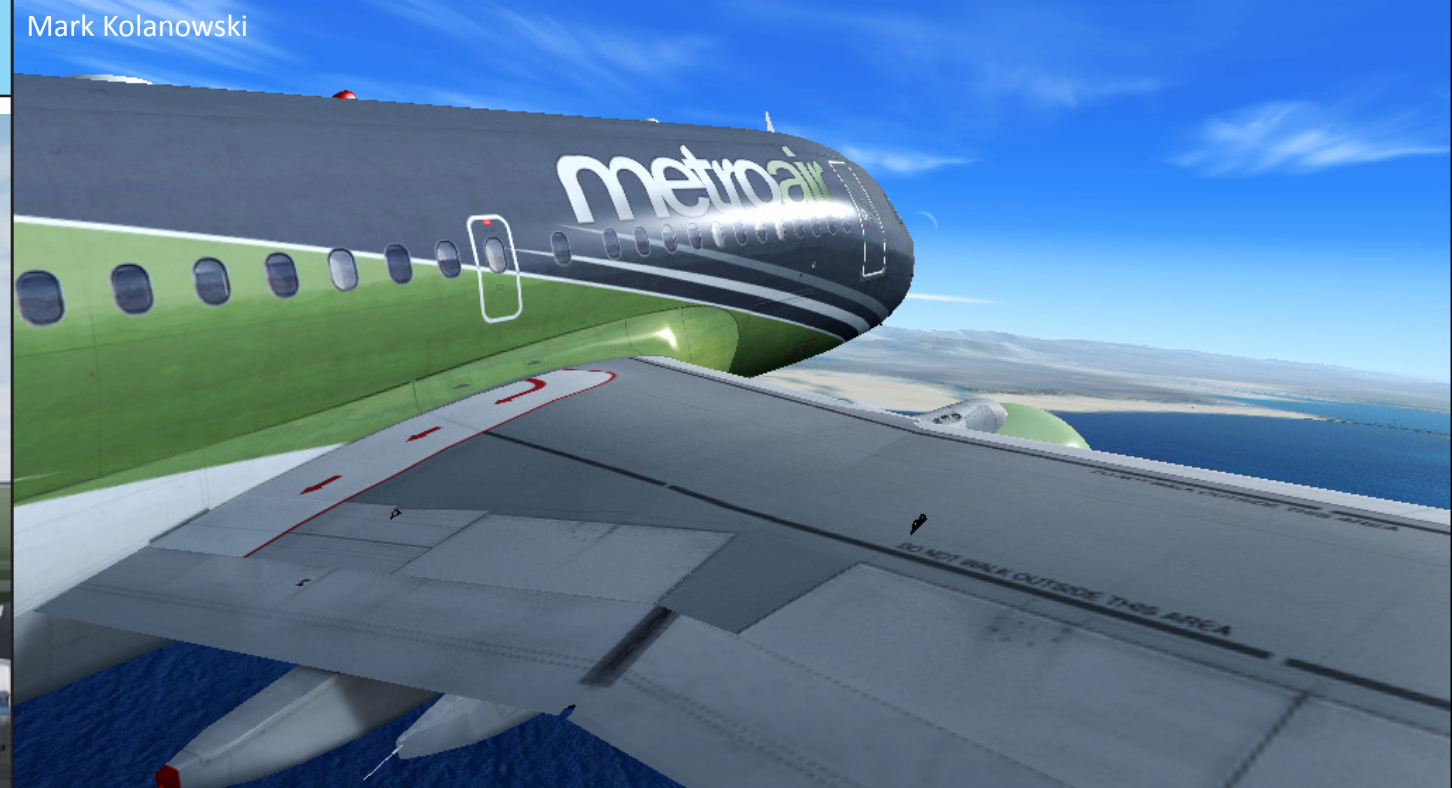
Steve Iles



Mike Adamo

the airline, but also to understand what goes on behind the scenes in real world business. "Our ultimate goal here at MetroAir Virtual Airlines is to provide you the pilot with an organized, fun, and professional atmosphere where you can truly enjoy the pleasure of being an airline pilot in a tightly knit community."

In the early days, pilots would fly from the DTW hub to numerous domestic destinations, starting in Dash 8 Q200s and moving up to 737-200s. Eventually more aircraft (often used and in decent condition) were purchased and leased, international and trans-oceanic routes were started, and soon we were living the good life.



The economic downturn has seen some of our older and less efficient aircraft leave the fleet (the older leased 767s, 732s, 752s and 742s). In their place MetroAir has slowly begun to convert it's mainline fleet to all Airbus (No

our management isn't just Airbus fans, every fleet and route decision is researched to ensure it is the best economically), while the Allegius regional division operates Bombardier aircraft (Q200, Q400, and CRJ 700). Additionally, the

all Airbus fleet makes it easy for pilots to move up the totem pole from the A32X series aircraft, to the flagship A330-243s. Due to economic reasons, MetroAir no longer calls DTW it's main hub, though it is still headquarters and location of the breakroom and pilot's tavern, flight operations have shifted to IAD and ONT.

A MetroAir pilot is expected to fly at least once a month, though nearly everyone is far more active than that. In addition to the incredible main website, MetroAir also offers a wiki page for airline information, a news blog (Often featuring rumor mill clips from a local newspaper), and very active forum. On the flying end of things, MetroAir is a step ahead of the competition, having numerous FS2004 and FSX compatible models custom tweaked for MetroAir use (fuel burn amounts



Cody Wilson



changed to reflect real world numbers, FDEs modified). The fleet is all painted in house by master texture artist Tom Collins, and never fails to impress with a classy green and grey two tone livery and the signature MAV tail. Dedicated MAV pilots enjoy a few perks as well in the aircraft and scenery end of things, but I don't want to give too much away. Apart from that, MetroAir has a custom ACARS program that connects your simulator to the website to automatically gather all pertinent information and file PIREPS, and a very knowledgeable and friendly forum with people always willing to help out teaching techniques from fuel planning to SID/STAR navigation either over the forums or the Teamspeak server.

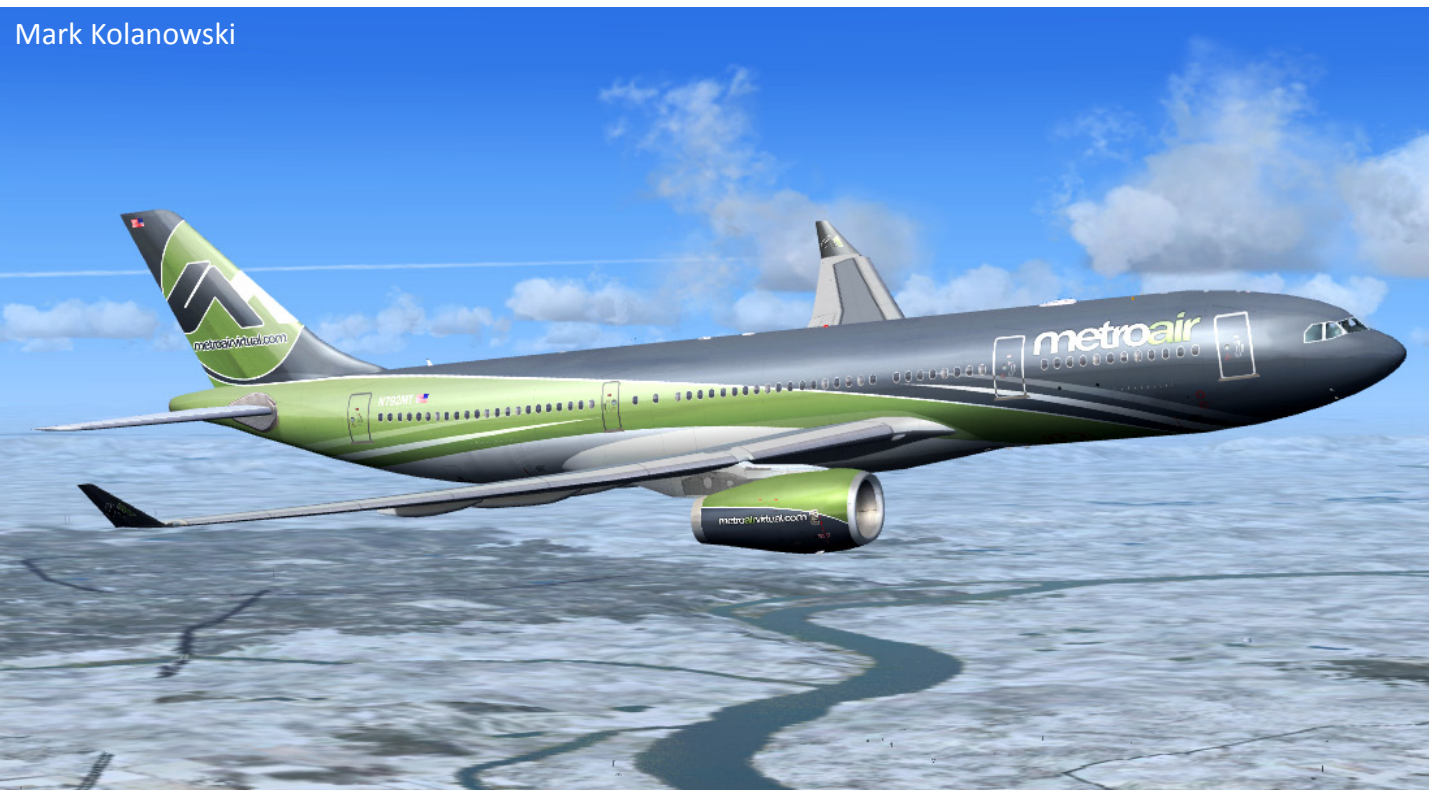


From the realistic business model to the friendly people to the awesome paint job and fleet, MetroAir Virtual Airlines stands out above all other virtual air-

lines that I have been involved with, and I encourage you to get involved!

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

Mark Kolanowski



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## Military AI

Article and Screenshots  
by Aaron Haase

If you play Flight Simulator 2004 or Flight Simulator X, chances are you've shared the skies with some AI airliners. But did you know that you can customize the traffic to include military flights? There is a large group of people who try to make the AI traffic as close to the real world military as possible. However, they deal with much more than flight plans.

Modelers create new aircraft models so that every type of plane can be placed into FS. Painters use image editing software to recreate real world paint schemes down to the smallest detail. AFCAD editors create files to alter the appearance and functionality of airports by adding parking spots, taxiways, and even runways. They work closely with scenery designers who study actual airport structures before creating virtual 3D models of them. The goal is to create the most realistic airport environment possible.

Once the airport is done, it needs some planes to call it home. This is where the modelers and painters come in. Using databases of actual military aircraft, they make the models and paint schemes for the units that call the airport home. Each aircraft gets a virtual replica complete with real world serial number. Painters

take particular pride in recreating special marking paint schemes usually found on unit commander aircraft.

After the full complement of aircraft has been made, the flight plan programmers get to work. They take each individual aircraft and create a weekly plan for it to fly. Sometimes they send the planes to a military operating area, other times the flight is

a trip to another base. As in the real world, most flights consist of multiple aircraft taking off, flying, and landing together. They can even be programmed to do low approaches or touch and go once they reach their destination. The finishing touch is adding a voice pack so that the 'pilots' of the planes use their real world callsign when talking to air traffic control.



As you can see, AI can really bring your Flight Simulator to life! There is nothing quite like cruising into a base only to find it filled with aircraft that look just like the real thing, and move on their own. Sometimes the best thing is to just sit back and watch them go. Luckily, there is a team of people who spend months of hard work on these packages so you don't have to. Their work can be downloaded for free at the Military AI Works forums. If you are interested in AI for Flight Sim, sign up and learn how to get started!

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

### Special Thanks To the Military AI Works Team

#### Modelling:

Nick Black  
Mike Guenther  
Kevin Reed

#### Painting:

Graham King

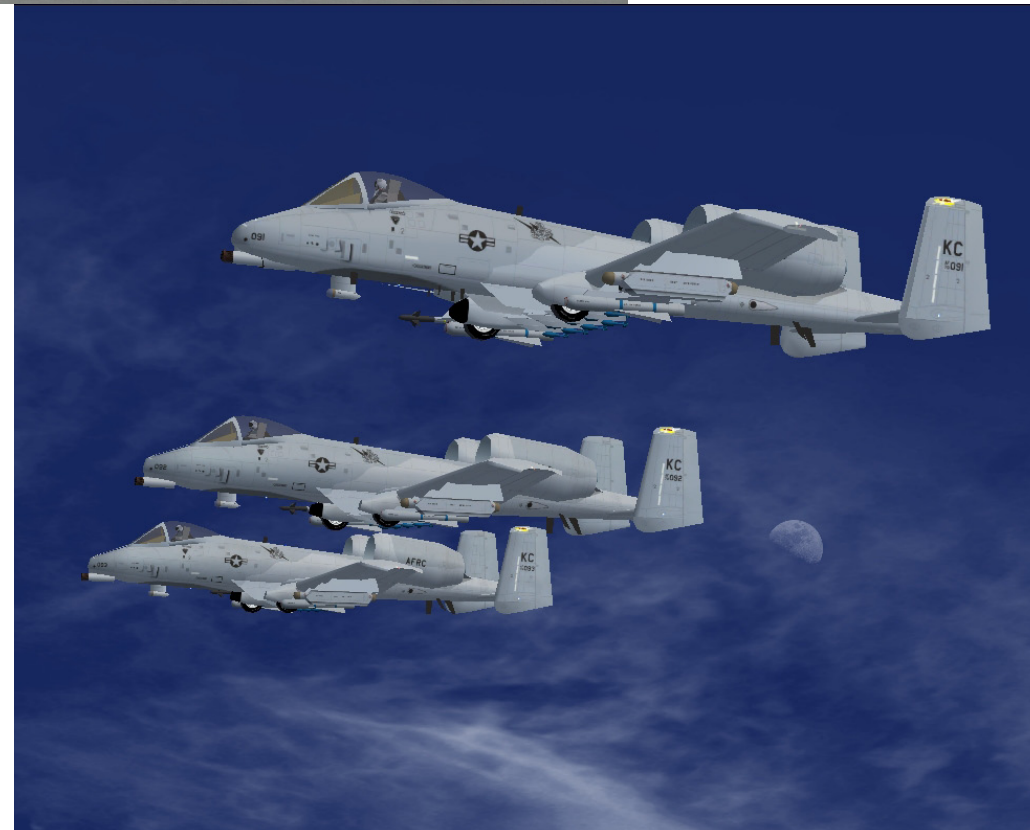
#### Large Packages:

Desmond Burrell  
Mark Campbell  
Gary Barker

#### Pre-Beta Test:

Steve Holland

#### MAIW Beta Team



# Cavanaugh Flight Museum Dallas, TX

Article and Photos  
by Andy Nixon

Cavanaugh Flight Museum in Dallas, Tx is home to one of the largest collections of flying warbirds in the world. Many of them fly on the airshow circuit with the USAF Heritage Flight and the US Navy Legacy Flight programs. Their current collection includes an FM-2 Wildcat, P-51 Mustang, P-40 Warhawk, A-26 Invader, AD-5 Skyraider, OV-1 Mohawk, a Corsair, and many more.

Currently the P-40 is undergoing restoration after blowing an engine last fall; they are still waiting on the arrival of the replacement engine. The Corsair is also waiting on it's overhauled engine.

The newly restored Tuskegee Airman P-51C "Red Tail" will be at the museum until April, and the Cavanaugh Flight Museum has also been named home of the CAF B-24 "OI 927" and will become the home of the B-29 "Fifi" after it has been restored to flight status.

Cavanaugh offers warbird rides in a Stearman, T-6 Texan, and the B-24 Liberator. Cavanaugh Flight Museum is located at Addison airport and is open seven days a week.



# Flying Leatherneck Museum MCAS Miramar, CA

Article and Photos  
by Christopher Roberts

The Flying Leatherneck Museum, based at MCAS Miramar, is the world's only air museum solely based to preserving the aviation history of the United States Marine Corp. The museum was established roughly 10 years ago after the Marines took control of the air base. The museum's mission is to preserve, document, and display historical artifacts so that succeeding generations can reflect on the rich legacy of Marine Aviation.

The FLM is comprised of an indoor area with assorted Marine aviation memorabilia, and an outdoor area with up to 25 aircraft. The museum boasts an impressive collection of modern era fighters, helicopters, and WWII aircraft. Some highlights of the collection includes: F/A-18 Hornet, F-4 Phantom, A-4 Skyhawk, F-8 Crusader, F3D Skyknight, F2H2 Banshee, AH-1 Sea Cobra, UH-34 Sea Horse, AV-8C Harrier, TBM Avenger, and a F4U Corsair. The aircraft at the museum are in different stages of repair, and with any outdoor museum the aircraft are susceptible to Mother Nature. However, the countless volunteers at the museum are constantly restoring planes in its collection, and plans are in the works to build a larger indoor museum to house the collection.



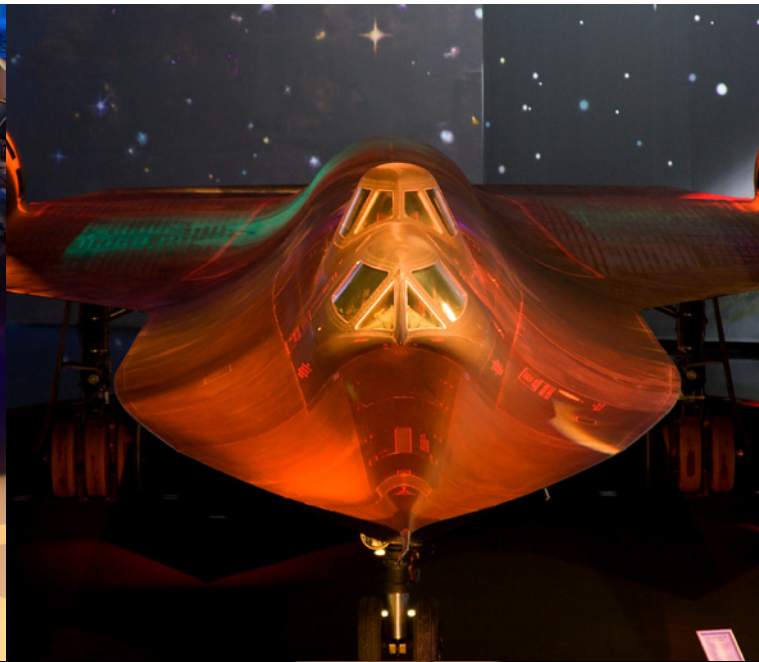
Overall this free museum is a great way to spend a few hours. The United States Marine Corps has a proud and storied history, and those that have served and

flown with the corp have worked tirelessly to preserve an maintain that history for generations to come at the Flying Leatherneck Museum.



# Kalamazoo Air Zoo Kalamazoo, MI

Photos by Ryan Sundheimer



## Military Aviation Museum Virginia Beach, VA

Article and Photos  
by Michael Rehbaum

For most people a vacation to Virginia Beach for Thanksgiving might seem like a nice peaceful time to get away. And while I enjoy escaping the full fledged early winter that my adopted home town of Rochester New York gave to me this November, going “home” to Virginia usually means finding time to visit one of the many aviation related museums that are located in the Hampton Roads area. This past December was no different. I got up on “Black Friday” and instead of heading out to the local Best Buy to see what kind of deals I could find, I drove myself over to the Military Air Museum (MAM). The Military Air Museum is located in the Pungo section of Virginia Beach. It is home to a large number of the aircraft that are owned by Gerald Yagen. Yagen and his dedicated staff have been working hard to build up the MAM and their dedication and hard work is truly paying off.

As I arrived at MAM that Friday I immediately knew that I was in for a special treat. Sitting out on the tarmac was Yagen’s P-40E-1. I grabbed my camera and went in. I quickly forked over my \$10 admission fee and went through one of the two hangers to get outside to the P-40. I immediately began composing images while no one



else was around. I don’t often get to do this at air shows so I wanted to take full advantage of this opportunity. Pretty quickly two of the workers from the museum came out to the aircraft and it was obvious that they were getting it ready for a flight. I then heard them say “The boss will be here in about fifteen minutes, let’s get this done right.” The boss? I inquired if they meant Gerry Yagen himself and they responded that they did. So here I am on a bright warm November day in Virginia. I’m going to watch a well known plane owner fly one of his fantastically restored aircraft. I have my camera with me. This well known feeling creeps up my spine. It’s the “I’m at an air show” feeling!

So what exactly does it take for something to be called an air show? Do the Blue Angels, Thunderbirds or Snowbirds have to perform? I know that’s not a requirement. Some of the best air shows that I go to every year are lucky to have Viper East in attendance. It’s not uncommon for Geneseo NY to only have piston engined aircraft. Geneseo is certainly an air show. So this event made me think, “why does it feel like an air show”? Well it has a rare aircraft that is in wonderful shape. As Mr. Yagen showed up a crowd appeared. So it has that element too. A plane. A well known owner/pilot in the warbird community, and a crowd to watch him fly that aircraft. I think in its



rawest form, that’s all it takes for something to be an air show. So, quite by surprise, I find myself at the smallest air show I’ll probably ever attend! And thankfully, I have my camera in hand. I’m not quite set up for an air show. My 300mm is up in New York. But I have my 70-200 and I can tell that I’m going to be close to the action. I can’t help but smile from ear to ear.

Gerry Yagen was a wonderful host on this day. While his crew made their final checks of the aircraft he took the time to come talk to the crowd that had gathered. He briefed us on his flight out to Suffolk, Virginia to his Fighter Factory workshop. He also told us that he would be making one low

pass when he left and another when he came back in two hours. He even offered to let us cross to the other side of the runway so the sun would be behind us. This man must understand the needs of photographers. I was truly excited.

Once Mr. Yagen had completed his pre-flight checks he cranked over the P-40’s Allison engine. Although it doesn’t have the same sound as the Packard Merlin that powers the P-51, it still has an amazing tone to it. It was made all the more fantastic by the fact that I had thought that I was just going to get to shoot static aircraft. Yet here I am photographing the plumes of exhaust coming out of the P-40 as it roars to life! With a

little bit of maneuvering Mr. Yagen was off of the small tarmac and onto the grass strip that the MAM is home to. Within moments he is speeding down the runway and lifting into the air.

The museum workers quickly offered that any one from the press could cross the runway to get pictures so that the sun was behind them. I quickly picked up my camera bag and sprinted across the runway being sure to “keep my head on a swivel” as I ran. No need to get injured during such a fantastic day. While I was running and getting set up Mr. Yagen and his P-40 made a circle of the airport and set up for a low high speed pass. I had one shot at this and I knew it. I put my

camera on its fastest setting and prepared for the pass. As he roared past I couldn't help but think "I'm at an air show" and as I panned with the aircraft I knew without a doubt that I'd gotten my shot.

As Mr. Yagen sped off towards Suffolk Virginia I re-crossed the runway and headed into the museum itself to take the pictures I had originally intended to take. Only now I had something else to look forward to, the return of Mr. Yagen and his P-40.

The two hours passed quickly as I went through the two hangers of the museum photographing all of the wonderful aircraft in the MAM collection. Soon I was back out on the airfield getting pictures of the P-40 returning. It was truly a great experience.

The more I think about this experience the more I realize that even though it was the smallest and shortest air show I've ever seen, it still had all of the elements of every other air show I've ever been to, other than perhaps air show food! But I'm not sure that's something that an air show needs to have to be a full fledged show. But my stomach sure is thankful when the food is around!

So the next time you're at an air show, no matter what the size, take a look around and see what the basic elements of that show are. I'd be willing to bet that you'll find that any air show, no matter what the size, comes down to the planes, the pilots, and the people that are there to watch. Even if that air show happens to be a solo act on a warm November day.







# KGRR - Gerald R. Ford International

Article and Photos  
by Ryan Sundheimer

You might think a snowstorm is the worst time to head to the airport to spot, but it can produce some cool and unusual results! On this day I stopped by the public observation area at Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids, MI for some quick spotting in the snow. The observation area is situated just several hundred feet from the main runway and has a clear view of the terminal. It is a wonderful place to spend some time, and there are even picnic tables for when the weather is nice!



# KLAX - Los Angeles International

Article and Photos  
by William Derrickson

In December, I had an opportunity to spend a few days at Los Angeles International Airport. I decided to go on this spotting trip to see the Qantas Airbus A380 as well as many other international "heavies" I do not get to see on the east coast. Before I went, I spent some time researching what locations would be the best for spotting at LAX. I already knew of the famous In-N-Out Burger location underneath the approach to Runway 24R, but I was concerned that the location would be backlit during this winter month. I also wanted to find a location which would be more conducive to shooting side profile shots of the arriving aircraft.

Doing a little bit of detective work online, I was able to conclude LAX's long-term Parking Lot C would provide the best vantage point to get the shots I wanted. I was concerned, as this location is not published anywhere in the many LAX spotting guides I came across.

When I arrived at LAX, I immediately headed to Lot C in my rental car and my suspicions were confirmed. Lot C was the perfect location to shoot arrivals landing at LAX's North complex (Runways 24R & 24L). The North complex is where the majority of international heavy passenger aircraft land. Although I spent the majority of my time spotting in Lot C, I did check out some of the other published spotting locations. I

was obligated to check out the In-N-Out Burger location I heard so much about. It was a great vantage point for being close to the arriving aircraft, but as I suspected it was not good for pictures this time of year.

I also spent some time at the well publicized Imperial Hill spotting location. This location is an official spotting location provided by the City of El Segundo. From here you can get great departure shots from the South Complex. This spot is also great for viewing any movement in the South Complex. During the three days I spent at LAX, I was impressed by the seemingly constant heavy aircraft movements. I would recommend that every spotter visit LAX one day.



## KNJK - NAF El Centro

*Article and Photos  
by Christopher Roberts*

“Ok, see the edge of the runway marked in white there? Don’t cross that line and we won’t have any problems” said PO Inman. With the rules of engagement laid out by our military guide the group disperses and toes the white line that is the edge of runway 26 at NAF El Centro. Within a few moments our first encounter slowly taxis out to the end of the runway. It’s a flight of three F/A-18s from VFA-106 equipped with MK76 practice bombs getting ready to head out to the Chocolate Mountain bombing

range. The anticipation among the group is starting to build as everyone checks their camera settings, making sure not to screw up the shot.

The three birds are lined up abreast on the end of the runway waiting for the cue to take off from the tower. “ROMAN 06, runway 26 cleared for takeoff,” is picked up over the scanner. This is everyone’s cue to train their cameras at the end of the runway for the inevitable pandemonium that is mere seconds away from occurring. A few hundred yards from my spot I can see through my view finder that the Hornet closest to us is coming to life. The two

General Electric F404 afterburner engines are spitting out 35,000 pounds of thrust which will help the Hornet break the bonds of this earth. With a quick lurch forward the F/A-18 begins its takeoff roll down the 9,500 foot runway. The Hornet is now racing down the runway with a vengeance, and the deep rumble of its engines is starting to grow. The acceleration of this aircraft is indescribable, and before I realize, the Hornet is shooting past us in a blaze of glory. The sound is tremendous and it rocks you down to your inner core. At its closest the Hornet is a mere 30 feet away racing by in full afterburner.



As the jet races by you can smell the spent fuel, and can feel the heat from its two engines. As quickly as the jet approached us it is gone speeding down the runway with its two glowing orange afterburners in full blow. The F/A-18 slips behind its distorted heat waves it has just created, and through the haze of exhaust and heat the plane is airborne.

NAF El Centro, located roughly 100 miles east of San Diego, is a training and support naval base. There are no active squadrons based in El Centro, but at any time there are numerous squadrons that will be training or transiting NAFEC. The remote location, close proximity to bombing ranges, and the ideal weather makes NAFEC an active base from fall to spring (summer temperatures can reach 115°). It is this perfect winter weather that led the US Navy’s flight demonstration team, the Blue Angels, to choose NAFEC as their winter home.

You can imagine the smile on my face when I received an e-mail saying I was chosen as one of the 35 individuals to attend the next photocall at NAFEC. A photocall is usually arranged by an outside group with the Public Affairs Office (PAO) of a particular base, and the group is given incredible access to the base to take photos. In this case it is my association with the aviation photography website Fencecheck.com that arranged the shoot. The group is encouraged by base personal to take photos of the ground crews as well as flying aircraft. This in turn allows the general public to see the hard work that the servicemen do day in and day out at the base (its not just about the glitz and glamour of flying jets).

Finally the day came to make the



110 mile trek from San Diego out to Imperial County. The group was assembled at the gate at noon and we were met by the Base Commander, PAO Officer, and our enlisted guides.

Our first stop was to the hot ramp where a host of F/A-18s and T-45s were coming and going. After 20 minutes we were bussed out to the LSO shack at the edge of the active runway. Runway 26 is equipped with a Fresnel Lens Optical Landing System (IFLOLS), and pilots use this, and the painted carrier landing strip, to hone the carrier landing skills. It was here that we spent three hours of good old fashion plane spotting, except this was the closest I have ever come to a moving aircraft. Some members in the group had been to prior photocalls, so they shared their tips with the others in the group, but nothing could have prepared me for that first takeoff.

There is no camera that is capable of reproducing the experience of an F/A-18 Hornet takeoff from 30 feet away, it is an event that can't be described. You can feel it, smell it, and hear it. I have often told many that what I remember the most is the "thump" in the chest you get as the jet screams by. During our time at the LSO shack the group was visited by F/A-18s, T-45s, AV-8Bs, CH-53, AH101 (RAF helicopter), and a C-2 Greyhound. Of course the time seemed to go by too fast, and soon we were back on

the bus headed home.

Once home the picture were quickly edited and then posted on various websites for the public to see. One of the interesting results of posting pictures online was that the pilots flying that day were interested in their photos. I received numerous e-mails from

pilots saying "I was with VFA-106 #440, did you get any good shots of me?" I even received e-mails from parents of pilots requesting copies of the photos I took. I felt extremely honored knowing that these US Naval aviators wanted my photos. In fact one of my photos is being used in a work news-



letter of one of the pilot's parent. This gave me great pride to know that I was able to showcase these pilots to their friends and family.

The NAFEC photo shoot was beyond a doubt the most exciting aviation photography I have ever partaken in. As an aviation enthusiast I realize that shuttling photographers around a military base is not job number one for these servicemen and woman. I felt honored that the base went out of their way to accommodate the group, it was experience I will never forget.

My thanks go out to POs Inman and Probert, PAO Michelle Dee, Cdr. Mitchell, Cpt. Thompson, the men and woman of the USN and USMC, and the folks at Fencecheck.com.

Photos on this page by Nathan Addison