

AirshowStuff

Magazine



Inside:

Jenny's Journal - TV Stardom

Tora! Tora! Tora!

Dr. Stricker's Warbirds Collection

Blue Angels Winter Training

Smoke at Sun n' Fun

Reports from the Field



May 2010

Click to turn the page

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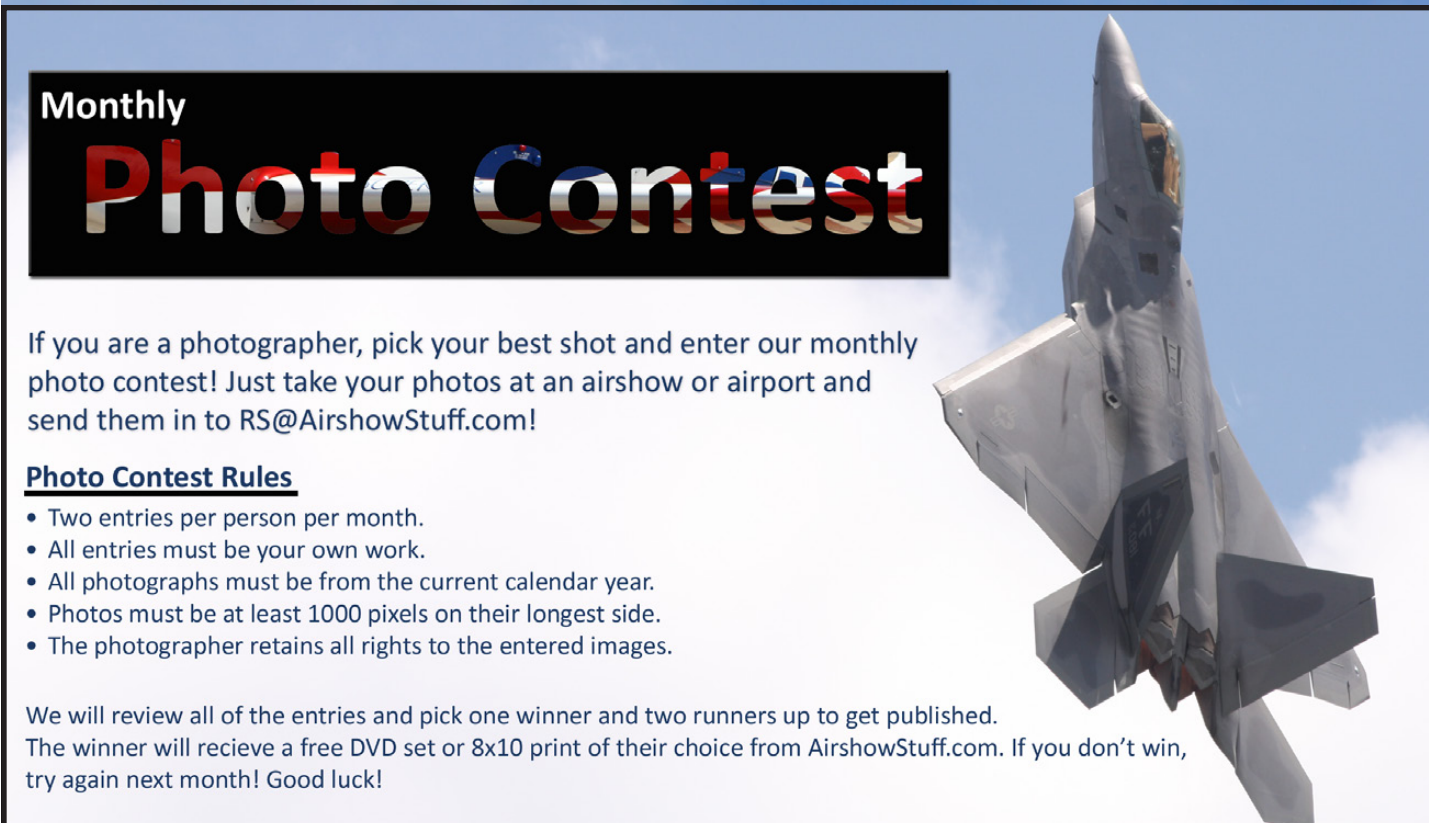
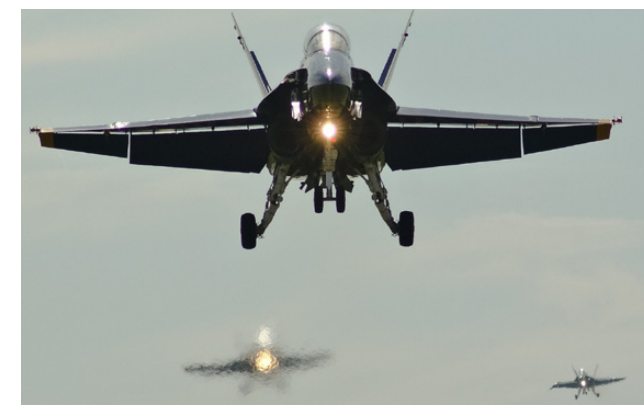
Cover Photo

The Blue Angels roar into the skies over NAF El Centro during their winter training period. Photo by Kevin Helm. For more, see page 16.

- 6 Jenny's Journal:
Television Stardom
- 8 Blast From the Past
Tora! Tora! Tora! Visits Eglin AFB
- 12 His Own Personal Air Museum
- 16 Winter Thunder
- 24 Smoke at Sun n' Fun
- 26 Reports from the Field



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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!

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!

Click to turn the page

2

3

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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. All it takes is a simple e-mail each month with photos or articles you would like to submit. We may even be able to help you get a media pass if you cover a show for us! If you would like to join our team, please drop us an e-mail at RS@AirshowStuff.com We'd love to have you!

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Thanks to those who contributed to this issue!

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TV Stardom

Article by Jenny Forsythe - American Barnstormer Wingwalking Team
Photos by Adam Haley

Though Walt has worked with several production crews in the past (programs such as MTV's Road Rules and other projects), February and March brought on a whole new experience for me. It all started with a phone call and some emails from Blue Chip Films back in January. They were looking to include wing walking in an episode of the new show INTERSECTIONS which will begin airing this summer on SPEED Channel. They sent us the information sheet on the show, and since it looked like it was a program all about the science and technology side of things (rather than pure sensationalism), Walt and I both agreed it would be a worthwhile project for us to engage in.

Not even a month later, the production team flew me down

to Florida for a weekend in early February and the filming began. The weather in Florida in February is usually fairly nice, but, unfortunately, it was far more challenging (windier and colder) than usual this winter. We all made the best use of time, though, and the film crew took care of the vast majority of our ground interviews and such on the first couple days. The biggest challenge on day one was keeping the strong and relentless winds from interfering with the tiny microphones they hid on our clothes, as well as keeping my hair out of my face as I attempted to speak on camera. Our next challenge was the fuel injector that Walt had custom made for Smokey in the early days – now, 40 years later, it decided to die on this particular weekend! Upon re-

alizing the work he had ahead of him, Walt told the crew we would have to reassemble at a later date to get the flying footage.

Upon researching his options, Walt decided to stay away from the fuel injector altogether and has now installed a float carburetor – the type of fuel system that Smokey was originally fitted with when Walt first purchased him in the late 1960s. It took several weeks for all the work to be completed, but Walt had Smokey put back together in time for filming to resume in early March. The film crew returned to central Florida and production resumed.

Having had experience with other film crews, Walt was a little weary of the team wanting to place their innovative little HD video cameras all over the Stea-

rman – the quality of footage Walt had seen from the efforts of others had never been all that great. But these guys amazed us with these cameras! As we saw the footage from our first flight, our confidence was raised in what this new technology could achieve. Over the course of the filming, we ended up mounting the cameras in a total of seven different locations on the plane to get a really nice array of perspectives. Of course, the producers shot from the ground, as well. And our good friend, Adam Haley, was on the scene to capture much of the excitement in still photography.

As you'll see in the episode, and/or when you catch us at an airshow, that float carburetor behaves a little different than the fuel injector. Walt had a very good idea of what to expect already, of course, but I wasn't exactly sure how it would change my experience – particularly with respect to what I would hear as we pro-



gressed through the acro routine. The difference was not as drastic as I had in mind; in fact, it took me watching a playback of the footage after our first flight for me to know what I was listening for. After that, I heard the difference in engine sound each time we rolled and momentarily hit zero Gs. And if you want to know more about the technical aspects of all this, you'll just have to watch our episode of INTERSECTIONS!

We understand other episodes will include other aviation and air-

show favorites, like an F/A-18 and Mike Goulian, all mixed in with a variety of other cool machines like race cars, submarines, and the shuttle's crawler transporter at Kennedy Space Center.

From the show's information sheet:

The show "will go inside the technology and break down what makes it all possible. From unique fuel combinations and air pressure, to tires, aerodynamics, G-forces and braking... Using a combination of interviews, behind-the-scenes footage, 3D graphics and super slow-motion photography, INTERSECTIONS shows viewers the intricate chain reactions needed to make the moment possible."

INTERSECTIONS is currently slated to begin airing in mid-July and as soon as we hear what our particular date will be, we'll share that with everyone. We hope to see many of you at an airshow this summer!

www.AmericanBarnstormer.com



BLAST FROM THE PAST



Article and Photos
By Brandon Marchek

TORA! TORA! TORA! VISITS EGLIN AFB

The hum and whine of aircraft engines could be heard high above the cloud dotted skies during the Eglin 75th Anniversary Air Show this April at Eglin Air Force Base, FL. More than 125,000 guests were in attendance during the two day show, which hosted the F-22A Raptor, the Army Black Daggers, the Thunderbirds, Tora! Tora! Tora! and several other acts. I was fortunate to be attached to the bomb squad of Tora! Tora! Tora! for both days, and it provided an air show experience, and a view, like none other.

Long before you or I arrive at the show gates, the pyrotechnicians are already at the airfield preparing for their ten-minute routine. Gallons of JP-8 fuel must be dispensed and hundreds of feet of detonation cord must be run each day in order to pull off the spectacular display of explosions that accompany their aerial act. This long process continues until the replica “Zeros” take flight later in the morning. Of course, you can also add an air show-wide safety briefing into the schedule. The morning of a Tora! Team member, as well as the other performers, is a busy one.

Once the act begins, it is ten minutes of non-stop excitement. The scream of the Texan’s Pratt and Whitney engine can be clearly heard over the loud sound of nearly 60 simulated explosions. Cap that off with the sharp sound of an air raid siren and professional narration of the unfolding events of Pearl Harbor and you have the one-of-a-kind experi-

[Click to turn the page](#)

ence only available at a Tora! Tora! performance.

Their success relies heavily on its staff of volunteers. Hundreds of dedicated volunteers, from music teachers to lawyers, participate each week to bring a dynamic history lesson to air shows around the country. Their message is simple: to provide the audience with a visual representation of the events that accelerated our entrance into World War II, while paying respect to those men and women who have lost their lives for their country, past and present.

I would highly suggest watching their performance to those who have not. More information about the history of the team, as well as scheduling, can be found on the group's website:

www.ToraToraTora.com



His Own Personal Air Museum



Article and Photos by Chad Grosvenor

Dr. William “Wes” Stricker is an allergist in Jefferson City, Missouri, but he’s also a highly experienced pilot with over 8000 hours of flight time. He logged his first 1000 hours in a Piper J-3 Cub he found up against a barn and bought with the money he and his brother had earned from hauling hay. Together, they restored the Cub when he was 16 years old. 40 years later he still has that Cub, although it’s probably due to be restored again.

Dr. Stricker believes that aviation is in your blood and you’re born with the desire to fly. He was hit by the bug early on because his dad was a WWII Air Force Major who took some of the first color slides ever printed. As a kid, his favorite TV show was “12 O’ Clock High”, the story of a B-17 bomber

group. All these things stimulated his interest.

When asked which plane he would fly if given the choice to pick from any in the world and why, he said that’s a tough call because every plane has its own specific mission. For pure forma-

tion flying, he’d want a T-6 Texan; for a cross-country trip, he would want a corporate jet; and for an all-around plane, it would have to be P-51 Mustang. He stated, “It’s as pretty to look at as it is to fly.” His P-51, Kansas City Kitty, was used as a photo recon ship. “The





there. It would be the first one of its kind flying since WWII ended. Although he has had a lot of memorable moments in the cockpit, one that came to mind was landing a Beechcraft Bonanza in a field outside of Council Bluffs, Iowa, in a snowstorm after an engine failure.

His favorite aircraft would have to be the P-51 Mustang. "It's a well-balanced airplane." He's flown everything from a Piper Cub, P-51, L-39, F-15, most notably an F-4, and the list goes on and on. As you can see, you can have full-time job and still enjoy your passion, whether it be aviation, wildlife, photography, you name it.

extra sense of breaking through the cloud deck and seeing nothing but blue skies," is his favorite part about flying.

He's restored a number of aircraft, including a BD4 in high

school, several T-6's, a P-51, and a couple TBM Avengers. Most recently, he's currently working on a Supermarine Seafire XV which he's hoping to have completed by Oshkosh so he can take it up



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WINTER THUNDER

Article by Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts

Like the swallows of San Juan Capistrano, the larger blue and gold birds of the United States Navy flight demonstration team, the Blue Angels, made their yearly migration to the sunny confines of NAF El Centro this past January. And just like the real birds of San Juan Capistrano, photographers descended upon El Centro for the chance to watch these majestic beauties fly.

For countless years the USN Blue Angels have used the clear dry climate of the Imperial Valley as the winter training home. From early January to mid March the Blue Angels will fly 120 demos to hone their skills for the upcoming air show season. The culmination of their efforts is demonstrated in the first air show of the season hosted by NAF El Centro. But with anything in life practice makes perfect, and the practice is an integral part that most fans don't get to see.

The typical winter training starts with the team running through the basics, such as smoke on in unison and simple formation maneuvers. In addition the team does not start out in their traditional six ship demo, instead the team splits up into the diamond and the solos. The early season practice starts with the diamond taking off in pairs, then later the full diamond. Once airborne the Blues fly to their remote practice facility called Shade Tree. Here is where the team spends the majority of their time during winter training. When the diamond has finished their practice they head back to NAF El Centro, and in traditional Navy style, perform a carrier break for landing. The moment that Blue Angel number 4

touches the runway Blue Angels 5 and 6 are positioning themselves for their trip out to Shade Tree. The team practices this way twice a day, six days a week, (Sunday is an off day) for roughly three to four weeks before the team is ready to start practicing over the field.

Thursdays and Saturdays are the air show fans dream days in El Centro. In 2010 these were the days that the team would have practice over the air field. Air show fans set up camp at the stacks of hay bales positioned just at the end of runway 30. The great aspect about NAF El Centro is that the base is fan friendly. The folks at NAF El Centro understand that the Blue Angels are a fan favorite, and some folks come a long way to see the team (As long as folks act responsible outside the perimeter fence I might add). Being able to get close to the team is one of the big draws for the fans during winter training. As many who have come before say, "Once you see a Blue Angels Winter training from the hay bales, it will ruin airshows for life." It is an experience of a life time to see a Blues show from the end of the runway. The highlight of every demo from the hay bales is defiantly the patented Blue Angels Diamond burner takeoff. The takeoff occurs from the opposite end of the runway so that Blue Angels 1 thru 4 are headed towards the fans. When the Blues clear the fence Major Chris "Kitty" Collins in the slot position has just come in behind Boss to form the



Kevin Helm



Kevin Helm

Christopher Roberts



team's trademark diamond formation. The experience of having four F/A-18 Hornets flying 100 feet over your head in full afterburner is indescribable. As I tell most people it is not the noise from the eight General Electric F404 engines that gets you, but rather the raw power and thump in the chest you get when the pass by.

Equally impressive to the pilots flying skills is the team's public relations skills. Similar to last year, team Boss Commander Greg McWherter, delighted the die hard Blue Angel fans with a trip out to the hay bales after one of their morning practices in early March. As with the 2009 team, all the officers made it a point to shake each fan's hand that made

the trip out to the desert. After that the team mingled with everyone, which was a great opportunity to talk to the team. For me personally I am always blown away that the team would take time out of their busy schedules to come and greet 100 fans. Most of us see them flying at airshow with hundreds of thousands of people in attendance, and see these pilots as superstars. However if you are able to talk to them you will soon discover that these pilots are human, just like you and me. In addition you get the feeling that these men and woman are humbled to be serving their country, and know why they are in the position they're in. I remember watching the documentary Blue Angels: A Year In The Life

which showed the team selecting next year's officers. One requirement that stood out was that the team had to look at all aspects of the candidate, included their personal skills. This becomes apparent if you are ever fortunate enough to meet the team. You soon realize why the Navy looks for that quality in their officers. It is reassuring feeling to know that those men and woman represent the best our country has to offer.

For most, air show day is a fun and exciting experience that we all look forward to. However for the bird spotters who sit on the hay bales at the end of runway 30 at NAF El Centro, air show day at NAFEC means that it is time for the shinny blue and yellow birds to fly back home to Pensacola. For



the past two and a half months we checked websites, looked at pictures, talked about the team's progress, and hung out at the old fence line. We got to know the pilots and even meet them, but as with any goodbyes it was hard to see the team leave. We also

know that next year there will be a new Boss (BA #1). In addition Kitty (BA #4), Walleye (BA# 5), and Spur (BA#8) will have finished their tour with the team. So there will be a new batch of faces for the 2011 season headed by newly appointed team Commanding Of-

ficer, Cmd. David Koss. As with the swallows of San Juan Capistrano, we sit and eagerly await the return of the Blue Angels to NAF El Centro. January is only eight months away.

Kevin Helm



Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts



Smoke at Sun n' Fun

I was at Sun n Fun, shooting photos at the media area in front of the Air Boss Station (which is the air show version of the control tower). The warbirds finished their passes and were being re-covered. The T-28s started to taxi in less than 100 yards in front of me. There were four in line and they stopped. The second one started smoking and I figured he was doing a smoke out, so I started taking pictures. The next minute was pretty darn interesting.

The smoke got worse and the plane disappeared. The T-28 in front of him (flight leader) turned sideways and the pilot looked back. I didn't have a radio on, but there was a lot of chatter. The T-28 engine shut down and the flames started. There were lots of big flames. I did a quick look around and there wasn't a fire extinguisher in sight, so I kept taking pictures instead of helping put the fire out. A few of those pictures are here. Honestly, I expected the pilot to abandon the attempted restart and hop out, but he kept cranking. I'd say he cranked for at least 30 seconds. The engine started, power went up, and the fire blew out. The planes taxied back to the ramp and parked.

The smoke was bad enough that it must have been in the cockpit, the flames (from both sides) were pretty much were up to the height of the canopy rails and yet the pilot kept cranking. Standard



procedure when you have an exhaust stack fire is to crank the engine, hope it starts and use the exhaust to blow the fire out. That's what happened here. If you look closely at the full resolution versions of these shots, the belly of the plane has a lot of oil on it and I'd say it could well have been close to getting out of hand.

The plane had some blistered paint and it was gone the next day. I never had the chance to talk to the pilot about it, since he was gone by the time I left the line after the show. I'm sure he was probably headed to the nearest bar; I know I would have been. I never did have a chance to talk to him about this and what was go-



ing through his mind.

I heard that the Air Boss (may or may not be true) called for him to shut the plane down when it started smoking. He did and the fire really started. I didn't see the fire trucks start to roll on this one. Personally, I think he went past the point where it was time to turn the airplane over to the

insurance company and hop out and run. I had a friend severely burned in a light plane crash some years back and it's not a pleasant experience.

There is one thing I did notice about the warbird show and that was that not all the pilots wore helmets; many flew the lighter planes and some of the

jets with just head sets on. This particular pilot did wear a helmet. Of course nobody wore oxygen masks. In the military, everyone wears oxygen in fighters and trainers. If nothing else, the mask protects you from fire to some extent (read a manual from a P-51 or P-47) and keeps you from getting burned. In this case, I'm sure there was a possibility of the pilot being overcome from the smoke which would have lead to a disaster. I'm sure he would have been more comfortable cranking the engine if he could breathe. I'm also sure if he needed it, oxygen would have given him some extra time to get out.

There is only one warbird pilot I can think of who always wears oxygen when he flies. That's Scott Yoak; the pilot of the P-51 "Quick-Silver". I'm sure his father Bill (who has been around warbirds for at least 40 years and built that airplane) decided at some point in the distant past that it would be safer to fly on oxygen than without it. Scott puts the mask on before engine start and takes it off after he shuts it down. There's probably some good insurance there.

Fortunately, this day turned out OK and everyone went home alright. My tag line on web posts is "Fly safe or meet me" with an Avatar of the "Grim Reaper". I also have it on the back of my business cards. Safety first. Make sure that the next time you fly, you aren't getting written about. Fly safely.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

We have some of the best airshow photographers helping us bring you amazing photographs and informative reviews from airshows all over North America and even the world. The following pages are stuffed with this outstanding coverage of recent airshows and aviation events.

If you would like to see your own photos and reviews here, just contact us and ask how to contribute. The only requirement is a passion for aviation!

VAC TICO Warbird Airshow - Titusville, FL

Article and Photos by Mark Hrutkay

I would like to thank Col. Terry Yon (US Army Retired) Public Relations Officer for the VAC for making this story possible.

The airshow season in the United States has to start somewhere; Titusville, Florida in the second week of March is that place. It's been starting there for many years. Titusville is on the east coast of Florida, about halfway between Jacksonville and Miami. There is where our government has been shooting things into space for 50 years and the Space Coast Regional Airport happens to be there. The show has been called TICO for as long as I remember and the sponsor and

promoter of the event is the Valiant Air Command Museum.

The VAC is a group of people who like old airplanes (which is nothing new to these pages), but they have a long history of being together. They have been around since 1977, starting with eleven members. VAC membership number one went to aviation author Martin Caidin. Mr. Caidin wrote over 50 aviation books as well as created and wrote the TV series "The Six Million Dollar Man". The group has surpassed 1,100 members and is even more interesting than most museums since NASA is in the neighborhood; they have a lot of members

who work for NASA or NASA contractors. So instead of the normal "volunteers" and other members, they have quite a few people who are engineers and skilled artisans who have worked on designing and assembling spacecraft. That closeness to NASA was really apparent last year when there was a launch of Space Shuttle Discovery about two hours after the show on Sunday. If there was ever a "double header" of an aviation event, that was it. NASA didn't repeat that this year, but the TICO show was still well worth going to.

The show is always good, logistically. The parking is great, for once you don't have to park



what seems like miles away and hike in. Parking is really nice and close. It was also free. Of course there were the usual food and souvenir vendors at the show. There was no reason to go hungry or not have a new shirt or hat to wear. They have reserved seating at the show and you could even rent a chair if you needed one. The show was pretty well set up.

The VAC's C-47 "The TICO Belle" is coming back into service after a lengthy rebuild. Back in 2002 there was an unfortunate incident that damaged the airplane and necessitated a lengthy rebuild. It was nearly ready to fly for last year's show and taxied over to the other side of the field under its own power, but caution took over and it didn't fly. It's been flying for about five months now and has already started making static line drops of paratroopers for airshows. That's not exactly a new mission for this airplane since it's been done before. The TICO Belle actually saw service and combat in WWII. She dropped pathfinders (Airborne Infantry) the night before D-Day far behind enemy lines. She delivered troops into battle in "Operation Market Garden" in September 1944 when the Allies invaded the Netherlands. That was the largest airborne operation of WWII and of course the least successful too. That lack of success didn't have anything to do with the performance of the TICO Belle. The Belle did so well, it was called in right after the Battle of the Bulge to drop supplies to the 101st Airborne at Bastogne. Without a doubt this airplane has a very distinguished record of service to our country and it has earned its place as the center piece of the museum.

The VAC is also in the process of



restoring a TBM Avenger, an F-4 Phantom, and an F-11 Tiger, which is coming along nicely. They have quite a few other planes that they have restored to static in their collection. For the show, the VAC does something that is pretty rare; they clean out the hangar. The VAC actually moves all the aircraft out of their hangars and onto the field. For a change you can see a collection of planes outside. Most museums would never consider doing that, but it's a great opportunity for war-bird buffs to see these airplanes outside and get some really nice and unique photos. On Saturday there was also a car show to make things a bit more interesting.

The VAC manages to attract a few very unique airplanes for each show. The Starfighters Demo Team's two seat F-104 was in attendance. I think this is a rare opportunity to see a very special airplane. The F-104s are spending more time doing work for NASA and with the cost of operating them, they are very rare at airshows. Sightings of them will be fewer in the future and coming to the TICO show is the best way to see them. There is no real way to describe the F-104 taking off or making a low fast pass. Once you see the F-104, the F-16 or F-18 doesn't really match up. It's like a comparison between a Nissan 370Z and a HemiCuda, both fast, both fun, but both so different that you can't start to compare them. You need to see it to believe it and this airplane alone makes the trip worth it. I'd really



like to thank the pilot F-104 Rick Svetkoff for putting on an amazing demonstration on Sunday.

In most years, the weather is a big reason to come to Florida for the show. Last year the weather was awesomely good. This year, well, let's say it wasn't as nice. There was rain on Friday with low ceilings and the show was cancelled in advance; but it cleared up on Saturday and Sunday was the type of nice weather you normally associate with Florida. It may have been a bit windy, but it was sunny and overall really nice. The ground had dried up and there was no mud to be found.

The show opened with a parachute drop from the TICO Belle. The skydivers that carried the flag down came from the Belle. The skydivers did a nice job forming up and stacking on each other's chutes with the stiff winds. The problem for them came at landing. The landings were a lot more interesting than usual with a couple of them getting dragged across the ground. Even knowing the conditions, they still jumped.

Thanks guys.

The theme of this year's show is "Honoring the Memory" and was dedicated to the men and women that served and sacrificed in the Vietnam War. There was a downed pilot rescue in the performance. An L-19 was "shot down" (landed on the runway) and the pilot came out shooting. He was shooting at about a dozen black "pajama" clad VC soldiers across the field. He was supported by strafing runs from a trio of T-28s. Eventually the "Sky Soldiers" UH-1H Huey landed and deployed American soldiers to suppress the VC fire and rescue the pilots. Everyone flew out in the Huey and lived to fight again.

The military demonstration teams that were at the show included the US Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet and the USAF A-10 Warthog. They were simply awesome as always. The performance of the Super Hornet is amazing. What a great plane. The A-10 is always a crowd pleaser. Hard to put into words, but the A-10 gets everyone looking at the show. While



a pair of Beechcraft C-45s. Then the really heavy iron came out. The TICO Belle flew again along with a pair of B-25s. Panchito and the Killer Bee were flying. The bombers were the tribute to Jimmy Doolittle and his April 1942 raid on Toyko. Tom Riley didn't fly the Killer Bee this year, but it was flown in the Tom Riley "style" low and fast. The pilot was skilled and really put on a show that pleased the crowd.

The show had a different P-51 each day. Dave Marco brought in his P-51D Sizzlin' Liz on Saturday and Jeff Michaels showed up on Sunday with Obsession. Both Mustangs supported the B-25s and then did short solo performances. I was really looking forward to seeing Scooter Yoak in the P-51 QuickSilver, but they didn't make it this year. If you get a chance to see him, you will be impressed. Scooter is an exceptional P-51 pilot and barely 25 years old.

As usual, the show was a good effort and the crowd went away happy. The TICO show has been a mainstay of the airshow calendar for 25+ years and this year was no different.

So when the time comes to get away from the cold weather of the north for a few days and enjoy a bit of sun and aviation, this is the place to go to. It will get your year off to a good start. You can learn more about the Valiant Air Command at

www.VACWarbirds.org



the A-10 is not the fastest plane in the fight, it's usually there first and rarely loses. People on the ground love it.

There was the "SkyBlazers" F-86 demo with Captain Dale "Snort" Snodgrass (USN Retired) flying it. Snort was the highest time F-14 pilot in the Navy and for all practical purposes, he invented the "Heritage Flight" where modern military jets fly with "classic" ex-military aircraft. Snort flew his normal low show (I don't think he has much of a high show) where he is low enough for the crowd to see what he's doing inside the

cockpit. Then he went on to fly the Heritage Flight with the Super Hornet. Other jets flying were the L-39 and L-29.

John Black, who is an F-15 pilot, went out and flew a perfect routine in a Super Decathlon on a day with winds in the 20+ Kt range. That was a demonstration of real flying skill on a day where you could see all kinds of heavy planes being blown all over the field. There were other acts that flew and all did a great job.

There were flyovers by all the other planes on the field, L-19s, T-34s, T-6s, and T-28s as well as

MacDill AirFest - MacDill AFB, FL

Photos by Chris Adolor





Riverside Airshow - Riverside, CA



Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts



Christopher Roberts



Kevin Helm



Christopher Roberts



Kevin Helm



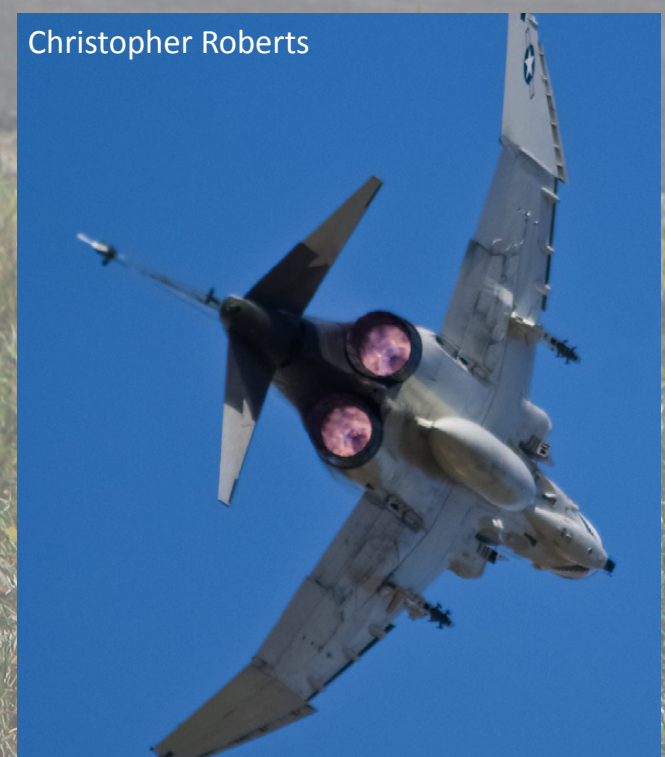
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Eglin AFB Airshow - Eglin AFB, FL

Photos by Brandon Marchek





Florida Intl. Airshow - Punta Gorda, FL

Article and Photos by Mark Hrutkay

Punta Gorda is on the western coast of Florida, south of Tampa. It is one of the nicer small shows in the country. I've never been to that part of Florida and never to Punta Gorda in particular; so this was a good opportunity to see it all. The weather on Saturday was great and it was a nice venue. Hotels were within a couple of miles and traffic wasn't a problem. Parking was pretty close to the show. Of course this is a real operating airport (with the airshow on the same side of the field no less) with several com-

mercial flights departing and arriving. The security level was high with them searching everything coming in, with lots of Federal Officers hanging around. There were TSA and even US Marshals all over the place. At least I felt sort of safe.

The show had a nice static display area with aircraft ranging from a Harrier to a C-130, a Stearman, L-39 jet, an A-10 Monster Truck and several others. The truck was a monster truck used by the USAF for recruiting. It has some body work that makes

it look like an A-10 Thunderbolt II and it really is different. I've never seen anything like it before and it sure does attract attention. There were a group of WWII reenactors set up, representing a local museum. The AC-47 Gunship "Spooky" was there, as well as a TBM Avenger and the Commemorative Air Force's Helldiver. A pair of B-25s came in for the show, Panchito and Barbie III. The Grimes Aircraft lighting company brought in their Beech 18 flying laboratory. That airplane has hundreds of aircraft lights on it of all types.



An amazing ship, which I'd love to see fly at night someday.

Entertainment in the sky came from the AeroShell T-6s who put on their normal above exceptional performance. Matt Younkin flew aerobatics in his red and black Beech 18 and he took the time to show us what that airplane could do. There was even a sailplane doing an aerobatic routine.

A real and rare treat was watching a P-51 doing low level aerobatics. "Scooter" Yoak flew in the family P-51 "QuickSilver" from Lewisburg West Virginia for the show. Scooter's father is Bill Yoak, who is probably the finest sheetmetal artisan in the warbird restoration business. Bill spent 14 years restoring and building QuickSilver into what many consider the perfect Mustang. Even though Scooter is only in his early 20s he has over 4500 hours of

flight time and 250 hours in the P-51. His routine is exceptional and very precise. Few pilots put on this kind of a display in a P-51 and after Bob Hoover retired, it's something rare to see. This is a great change of pace from watching warbirds do repetitive passes over the active runway. They take

a lot of pride in that airplane and you can see it when Bill carefully wipes it down between flights. I know it made the people in the crowd happy.

High energy aerobatics were preformed by John Klatt in his Air National Guard sponsored plane. John is an F-15 pilot and





he can really twist a plane around the sky. John's routine was very impressive. Another high energy performance came from Rob Holland in his MX-2, another monoplane, who literally tore holes in the Florida sky. Rob is a heck of a showman.

There were a session of flybys of the warbirds with QuickSilver, the Helldiver, and a pair of B-25s. Of course there were those crowd-pleasing explosions, which make everyone happy. I'm sure it really makes the pyro crew happy since they spent a lot of time and effort setting up display.

The military demos were fun to watch. There was an A-10, which put on a low level display of agility and grace. There isn't much that

is more impressive than seeing an airplane as large as the A-10 doing maneuvers that are as tight as some of the other planes on the field. When the A-10 flies, everyone pays attention.

The Marines have a lot of commitments for their Harriers. The main one seems to be using it to defend our country and fight in two wars. I understand that there are only going to be four military Harrier demonstrations this air show season. This doesn't take into consideration any of the demos done by Art Nalls who happens to own the only civilian Harrier as well as the L-39 jet at the show, but that is another story. The Harrier is simply the loudest flying machine you will ever see

short of the Space Shuttle. When it flies, not only do the people pay attention, they also move to the front of the crowd line. The Harrier did a short takeoff, made a few passes and then hovered for a few minutes. The demo ended up with a short landing. Everyone watched, virtually with their jaws hanging open, nobody was talking, a lot had their hands over their ears and it was nothing short of the high point of the show. It was also the end of the show too.

The weather for the Sunday show started out looking bad and quickly went to worse. About 9:30 AM, I talked to security and they said a storm was about two miles off the airport. People were running for cover. Betsy and I



headed for the car and in a few minutes it started raining. Three hours later it was still pouring rain and we left. As you may well guess the show was cancelled. So we headed to Naples Florida, I've never been there and I managed to get to see it on the day they got more rain than any other day in history. Lucky me.

Punta Gorda was a great show. Moderate crowd, reasonable food prices and normally nice weather; it was well worth going to. The Sunday weather was a fluke and shouldn't deter anyone from going.



Sun n' Fun - Lakeland, FL

Article by Mark Hrutkay



Joe Osciak

Sun n' Fun is always a great place to go in the spring to get the air show season started off right. It's in central Florida and the weather this time of year is generally very nice. Sun n' Fun is a bit more than a simple air show. It's a week-long event that supports the local air museum and in a lot of ways gives you an idea what to expect at Oshkosh later in the summer. There is a lot that goes on here, and it would take a book to cover it all. So I've hit the highest of the high points.

There are several hangars of exhibitors selling everything you can name that has to do with aviation. There are also companies there selling all types of aircraft, new and used. You can buy a print or painting from Sam Lyons, a house in an airpark community or a new jet from Beechcraft. Those are the kinds of things that can really test your credit card's limits.

Speaking of Sam Lyons, he has been a regular at Sun n' Fun for over 20 years. Most of us are familiar with his art (very nice work Sam) and a lot of us actually know Sam and he is a great guy as well as a great artist. Sam was just made "Artist in Residence" at Sun n' Fun and he is now an official part of the organization. A lifelong Georgia resident, he also moved to Lakeland and now lives a few miles from the airport.

I had the opportunity to spend a morning talking to Larry King (a different one than you are thinking of) who is an air show pilot from Atlanta. Larry has an unlimited low level aerobatic waiver



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and comes to Sun n' Fun every year. Larry brings his Pitts Model 12 Serial #2. This yellow and purple biplane was the last one that Curtis Pitts designed before he died. It's about the size of a Pitts S2 which is 260HP, but it's powered by a Russian M14p radial of 360HP. It will climb over 3200 FPM and is an incredible looking machine. This Model 12 is gorgeous and could easily be a trophy winner in the judging. The schedule at Sun n' Fun is so full there really isn't a slot for him to perform. Larry comes down to circle the skydiver with the flag at the beginning of each day's air show. While he can't put on much of a show (he does make those circles steep and VERY fast), at least he gets to fly every day. I'm really looking forward to seeing him fly some unlimited acro in this plane sometime this season. I'd say it's impressive; taking off one day he hit the throttle pretty good and it literally leapt into the air unlike any other airplane I have ever seen. To call it a bit over-powered is an understatement.

The show even overflows the Lakeland Regional Airport to Polk City. Kermit Weeks has his Fantasy of Flight facility there. On Thursday, Kermit hosts a seaplane fly-in at his lake (if it wasn't cool enough to have your own airport, museum and over 100 airplanes, he also has a lake for the seaplanes next door). Well, he may not own the lake, but he uses it with his Duck and other planes. I didn't get over there, but I saw several amphibians coming in for

Mark Hrutkay



landings as I headed to the show that morning. On Saturday, Kermit also hosted a "Mustangs and Mustangs" show. He got out his P-51D and P-51B and flew them, as well as the WildCat and his TP-40. There was also a Mustang car show at Fantasy of Flight at the same time. I stopped in about 9:30 AM and estimated that there were at least 500 Mustang cars on the crosswind runway and the line of cars coming in had no end in sight. A great show time was had by all. Thank you Kermit.

For Mustangs, Sun n' Fun was pretty well blessed this year. There were a lot in attendance over a few days. At the show were about 1/3 of all the TF-51Ds in existence; Crazy Horse, Crazy

Horse 2, The Little Witch, and E Pluribus Unum. Also on the field were Dave Marco's Sizzlin' Liz and Ed Lindsay's Camo Cavalier P-51D. E Pluribus Unum won Grand Champion Post WWII.

There was the new restoration from American Aero, a special aircraft. Gary Norville and his crew restored an exceptional P-51 for Selby Burch called "Dixie Boy". This airplane had most of its skin replaced and it was beautiful. There were three people working there, polishing it before judging, and the mirror finish reflected their work. That mirror finish also reflected about everything else in sight too. It was really superb and was Grand Champion WWII, an honor it well deserved.

The Commemorative Air Force set up a tent and had the Helldiver, a T-6 and their recently completed P-39 on the ramp. That was the first P-39 I've seen that was really flyable (it flew in) since Kalamazoo in 1983. It's a rare airplane with only two other potential fliers in existence at this time. John Fallis brought in his P-40 which spent most of its time parked next to the P-39. That gave everyone a chance to compare two of the best pre-WWII fighters on the field. There was a smattering of T-6s and T-28s in attendance. Military static display on the ramp included three of each: A-10s, T-38s, T-45 Goshawk Navy trainers. There were also several F-5 "aggressor" fighters from the Na-

val Air Station Key West one day.

Lee Lauderback went up in Crazy Horse 2 and put on a masterful display of aerobatics. Lee is one of the very few pilots that regularly does low level aerobatics in the P-51. The other aerobatic routines varied with the equipment used. Matt Younkin did a routine in his Beech 18 that went well beyond anything that Beechcraft had in mind for that airplane when it was designed. Kyle and Amanda Franklin (Matt's sister and brother-in-law) have a "Pirated Skies" pirate-themed routine they do with a Black Waco. Amanda is a very pretty lady as well as the wingwalker and does a great job there. She is also featured in Scott Slocum's "Bombshells" Calendar. Julie Clark performed in her magnificent T-34.

One interesting thing that happened there that I've never seen before was the Heritage Flight. Normally that flight is made of fighters from the WWII and the modern military; this one was transports. There was a Caribou from the Cavanaugh Flight Museum and a C-17. Talk about dissimilar formations flying. The C-17 is more than twice as long and has twice the wingspan of the Caribou. To say it dwarfs it is an understatement. However to get them to fly together is a testament to modern aircraft design. The C-17 can fly pretty slow and handle very well. The pass was a real crowd pleaser, and then the C-17 went on to put on a demonstration of its flying ability.

The last part of the show was



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what everyone waited for; the Thunderbirds. If you have ever seen them fly, this show was no different. What would be a once in a lifetime flight for any other pilot is simply a day at the office for them. The show went perfectly, as usual. It really showed the coordination of six pilots, six F-16s and a lot of people on the ground putting it all together. They did a magnificent job. Anyone watching them fly knows what true

precision flying is all about. The crowd watched the entire show like it was the final seconds of a Championship Basketball game. Nobody was buying a hotdog when they were flying.

This story would not have been possible without Mary Lou at Sun n' Fun Media. She spent a week helping all of us out with all the things we needed to get the story.

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Thunder Over Louisville - Louisville, KY



David Jacobson



David Jacobson



David Jacobson



Ryan Sundheimer

David Jacobson



Ryan Sundheimer



Ryan Sundheimer



Ryan Sundheimer



Ryan Sundheimer



Ryan Sundheimer



David Jacobson



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Ryan Sundheimer



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NAS Ft. Worth Airshow - NAS Ft. Worth,

Photos by Andy Nixon





Defenders of Liberty Airshow

Barksdale AFB, LA

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