

# Showcase

The show's featured act was the ROK Air Force's Black Eagle demonstration team, featuring their A-37 Dragonfly aircraft. Saturday provided this six-ship formation team and their red, white and blue jets clear skies to offer a rare opportunity for U.S. air show fans. On Sunday, the Black Eagles took to the skies once again only to be forced to abort their routine after ten minutes due to poor visibility.

Air show Director Major Nick Roach and his staff are to be commended for their outstanding show. Planning an air show is never easy, but to do it while maintaining the armistice on the Korean Peninsula and having over 30 percent of your acts

fly in from other countries is beyond the call of duty.

## Air Show Thunders Back to Point Mugu

by Gregory W. Griggs

A crowd of nearly 74,000 people watched as the Air Force's premier precision flying team, the Thunderbirds, performed during the first day of the Naval Base Ventura County Air Show.

Though organizers had worried about low-lying fog that

lingered into early afternoon at Point Mugu, about 20 vintage, custom and military aircraft performed throughout the day.

"The weather cooperated, and we were really happy to have all of the planes fly today," said base spokesman Vance Vasquez. "It really helps the community to see what we do here. Today they got to see some of our best high-tech stuff."

Many children and families were among Saturday's crowd, attracted by the six-hour display of dancing aircraft as well as carnival rides, food and souvenir booths.

Eric Schonning of Camarillo said he hadn't been to the air show in several years, but it was as good as he remembered.

"I liked the Heritage flight," Schonning said, referring to a flyover of two modern Air Force jets, the F-22 and F-15, along

with a P-51 Mustang from World War II.

Last year's air show was canceled when organizers could not secure an aerobatic team.

This year, the precision stunt flying team included two female pilots: the first female Thunderbird, Major Nicole Malachowski, who flew right wing; and Major Samantha Weeks, the Thunderbird squadron's first female solo pilot.

Weeks, 31, whose father is a retired Air Force master sergeant, said that when she was six years old, she got to lounge around in a tanker plane during an airborne refueling operation, which convinced her that she wanted to grow up to fly fighter jets.

"It's definitely the thrill of my life," Weeks said. "It's a phenomenal, fun, exciting time. It's a lot of hard work ... but it's a job I love doing."



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY MACS 2ND CLASS JASON R. WILLIAMS

Vapor trails disperse in the wake of an Air Force F-22A Raptor at the 42nd Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC) Air Show at Point Mugu, CA.

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For Major Chris Austin, 35, the air show was a homecoming of sorts. He said he expected about 50 family members from throughout the state to watch him fly during the weekend.

Another thrill for Austin was a chance to squeeze in a visit to the beach to go surfing, a welcome change from the Thunderbird base's desert location outside Las Vegas.

Surfing "will be part of my mental preparation," he said.

### Slidell Air Show A Great Success – Event 'At Least Four Times Larger' Than Last Two

The numbers are in ... and the Slidell Airshow, held Saturday, March 31, at Slidell Municipal Airport in Louisiana, attracted an estimated 10,000 people and raised \$5,200 for the St. Tammany Association for Retarded Citizens. Those numbers reflect

attendance numbers "at least four times larger" than in the past two years, event organizers tell ANN.

Over 260 people attended the special dinner the night before the show dedicated to veterans of the Vietnam War. Guest speaker for that event was retired Air Force Col. Murphy Neal Jones who spent six-and-a-half brutal years as a prisoner of war in what was then North Vietnam.

After a morning flying Young Eagles for the area youth, civilian and military acts performed. Civilian aerobatic acts included Ken Appezato in his Pitts; Charlie Kulp, aka "The Flying Farmer," and his comedy act in his J-3 Cub; Phillip, Jody and Robby Grice separately flying a T-6, Christian Eagle and Ag Cat; and Dofin Fritts in his gyrocopter.

Civilian fly-bys included Ben



2007 Slidell Air Show attendees enjoy the Army National Guard Blackhawk demo, flown by CW4 Mike Chapman and Capt. Scott Miroddi.

Kennedy (Falcon 20 jet), Darryl Christen (L-39 Russian jet), Bill Triay (Stearman), Eric Covell (R-44 helicopter), and Gina Moore of Warbird Sky Ventures (T-6).

Military performances included a Black Hawk helicopter demo, an H-60 Coast Guard rescue demo, and an A-10 demo flying in formation with a P-51 Mustang from the World War II era. Military fly-bys included an Air Force C-130, Marine Corps Huey and Cobra heli-

copters, Customs Tri-Star helicopter and Air Force F-15 jets.

The show also featured numerous ground displays. Among them: a Louisiana National Guard NASCAR display and pontoon bridge-building vehicle; Textron Marine and Land Systems armored security vehicle; several St. Tammany Fire District 1 fire trucks, Air Force flight simulator and mini-raptor; antique car display; and a radio-controlled aircraft display.

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