

TFDC AIR SHOW 2009

The TFDC Air Show at AFB Overberg took place on 14/11/09. Overberg is about 90 minutes drive from Cape Town, near the most southern part of Africa, resulting in being attended mainly by locals and die-hard aviation fanatics. Still about 36000 people attended. What makes it unique is that it is also the base used for aircraft evaluation and weapons tests. It is therefore not common to see SAAF Museum and even civilian participation on a large scale due to its location.

As you read this you will have heard that the show was marred by the tragic loss of Dave Stock, who perished in the two-seater Lightning T.5 that crashed due to technical problems just over the side of the airfield. The Overberg Show had a wine auction the evening before, with a night show that was only open to ticket holders, with the result that I cannot report on the aircraft flying that evening, but it was reported that the Lightning ZU-BEX already encountered problems during that show. More about this later.

The show opened with the usual SAAF Golden Eagle Parachute Display Team – but as they were against the sun from our position, the photos resulted in silhouettes. This was followed by the Silver

Falcons. The Astras displaying on Saturday morning were 2023/1, 2020/2, 2024/3, 2018/4 and 2027/5. On Saturday afternoon No. 3 was replaced by 2017.



The crowd was fortunate that all the aircraft take off and land right next to the crowd line. The first photo shows No 1 starting its engines for

takeoff. The usual 5 ship display was given with the colours shining off nicely against the almost lilac clouds.



The usual pilots were again led by Scott Ternent. This time we were fortunate to be allowed next to the runway and I

managed to get you a rare up close shot of them landing and taxiing.

The Hawk flown by J Scott (lead-in Fighter Trainer (No 267)) enthralled the crowds by shooting off flares during some of its climbing maneuvers. The first time it resulted in great excitement from the crowds, after which I was glued to my camera. I managed to catch it in the act a few times, but the sun played havoc, and the best one that I have is shown. The Hawks flown



by J Scott and Leon Bath also showed off their Toss Bombing by dropping MK 81 Practice Bombs during the morning and afternoon shows.



The series of shots to the Left shows them taking off with the bombs, where they came to show the crowds the bombs, and where they dropped them. I tried hard



to follow the bombs during their track, but they are so small and fast that I eventually just watched where they impacted. A great comfort to know that we are watching them do their work without being on the receiving end.

Must have been hard work as Leon Bath is looking like he is in trouble with his ground crew. Maybe he forgot something up there??



The Gripen D (07) is tightening up its display every time. Flown by Lt. Col Charl Coetzee (Basset) it is showing off its tight turning circles. The drawback for photographers is that it only shows its undersides to the crowd rather than the usual side and wing platform views. I chose this photo to show the bright green head up display in the windscreen. The pilot does a really impressive bank during take-off that always looks impressive.



The Gripen, again flown by Lt. Col Charl Coetzee (Basset) and the Mirage FI AZ (233) by Lt Col Leon Bath, gave a dissimilar ACM display to show off the Gripen maneuverability compared to that of the FI-AZ.



The take-off of both the fighters



The Gripen staying inside the F1-AZ's turning circle

Being an old timer with a soft spot for the F1, I was not convinced that the Gripen would have survived that encounter. Next time I think they must show one where the F1 is the chaser and then swapping so that the Gripen does the chasing. That will probably show off the Gripen's ability better.



Both these aircraft then gave a loose formation flypast



The F1-AZ also gave a display by Lt. Col 'Blokkies' Joubert



Lt. Col Blokkies Joubert approaching his F1



A real Flamgat!



Puma ZU-PUM (ex SAAF 157), flown by John Caudwell made its appearance. It was one of the four civilian aircraft present at the show. The Blue and White colours photographed well. Looking at its successor, the Oryx from 22 Squadron flown by Lt. Col Cobus Meyer, as well as Lt. Col Alan Mathieson shows all the lumps and bumps needed in its operational role.



Helicopter formation displaying the SAAF's current operational models



Rooivalk from 16 squadron flown by Petri van Zyl, and Super Lynx 300 from 22 squadron flown by Braam Bell crossing paths, before each giving its individual display



Rooivalk 674 in the morning, and) in the afternoon, a view that you do not want to see if you are the bad guy!





The Augusta A109, flown by J O'Connell reflects the sun for us during its afternoon show



Not often seen at Air Shows in South Africa in the last few years, is the Astra in its trainer scheme. These 2 photos show the Astra 2036 flown by Lt Col George Muller.



Two Harvards flew, the display consisted of a high formation fly past against the sun. I thus only show you their ground views i.e. SNJ-3 78-6799, ZU-AZW ex SAAF 7650 and 28-557 ZU-SAF (ex-Mozambique).



Civilian displays were the L-39 flown by Dave Mundel, but again too far away and against the sun to take any worthwhile photos. The L-29 ZU-DNW flown by Koos Kieck showed off its new livery to the crowds. Probably the most impressive scheme found on any L-29's in the world, and this in our own country.

Against the sun this photo still shows off its amazing topside. I hope the owner Mike Honsa will display at some other shows with better light in the future.



Then there was Thunder City's show that was going to display the Hunter, Buccaneer, and two Lightnings. In the end only the Lightnings displayed. ZU-BEW, the single-seater F-6 started its display, and shows its really big size. Not seen to take off and land at the AAD, I am including this taxi shot to show how big these aircraft are .





ZU-BEX, the two-seater T-5, eventually lost, displayed in the morning as well.



ZU-BEX, deploying its drogue chute on landing.



During its ultimate display it gave 3 passes before declaring an emergency. This photo shows an ominous smoke trail that was present even at take off, that eventually became a full fire as it spun out of control. Dave was ex SAAF, SAA and also served at TFDC as a test pilot and was known as an exceptional pilot amongst his peers. The show was interrupted for 2 hours and resumed with an altered schedule later on.



A simulated battle was performed during the Air Capability Demonstration, comprising 2 Hawks (250, 267), Rooivalk

(674), Oryx (1238) and Augusta A 109 (4006). Troops were dropped by the Oryx, which lead to a fire and movement

sequence (39 & 40). A casevac was performed by the Augusta A 109. It's not every day that we photographers are able to show you our troops in 'action'.



Last but not least the Silver Falcons ended with their afternoon display. This time the sun was good to us showing off good flying and good light effects.

This photo does not show fire on the wing, but



really bright sunshine as No 5 (2027) flown by Maj Nico Frylinck (Whisper) spins from altitude.



Fittingly they ended the show by giving us the 'Missing Man' breakaway right at the end. A very sad crowd stood still as they watched the Air Force say goodbye to one of their own.

As usual, my tribute to the ground crews. I saw this ground crew member walking to Hawk 267, take a look at something, and then going to clean this spot on the windscreen vigorously. Just shows you that they all love their aircraft, whether on the ground or in the air.



On behalf of all of us I would like to say thanks to the main sponsors and also numerous small sponsors that made this show possible. We know the economy is hitting us all but they still produced the goods.

On the base I would like to thank acting OC Lt Col Marius van den Heever and AO Marius Nel, the Media Liaison Officer who assisted us and looked after all our needs during the two days that we shared the base with them. We all have our demands to try and get the data we need, and it is always difficult to please us all. I am glad to see that the organisers are beginning to co-operate with the photographers to position us in the best position with respect to the light.

As always thanks to Brig Gen Derrick Page and his crew in helping with this report.

SUMMARY OF THE SHOW:

Not a well publicized show, but a real gem. We still need to get our display pilots to get into the overseas habit of displaying their aircraft to the crowds. We always hear that they turn their undersides to us in the interest of crowd safety. The UK air shows display many 60 year old warbirds ~~and~~ show us mild banks and full wing platform views in even more restricted air space. Their safety rules, with regard to spectator safety, are as strict as ours, but they still manage it well. Our pilots always perform a wide turn away from us with their undersides to the crowds. I am not so sure that this is the safest option. If anything goes wrong, the momentum towards the crowds may even be more dangerous.

An explanation is that the majority of our participating pilots are not dedicated air show pilots and thus air show aircrew briefings are very explicit in regard air show safety with regard heights, crowd lines and maneuvers. CAF has ruled no deviation is acceptable hence the stringent adherence requirement by the SAAF Air Show bosses (Lt Cols Hanekom and Moore). Air shows (incl AAD) whilst on SAAF turf will be run to SAAF rules (ASSA can only advise). This is obviously due to the fact that if any injuries occur, the Government carries medical and legal responsibilities, whereas ASSA does not have the funds to cover such an insurance nightmare.

STEFAN BOUWER

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