



AIRSHOW



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EDITORIAL

The French Patrouille de France's fame is well established world-wide, but it's been a long time since I wished to publish a special article about this elite team which represent so well our country and its air arm. The air show in Coulommiers gave me the occasion to get very close to the planes and their pilots, and to "shoot" the ground team which is always left in the background, a team without which nothing would be possible. Today my wish has come true and I hope you will like this article written by someone who simply loves this team: Christian Tournemine, and illustrated by our profile specialist: Bertrand Brown who produces the best profiles I have ever seen. I thank them both for their close collaboration and the speed and efficiency they adopted for this publication as you're about to read this issue.

Only four weeks before the CAF General Assembly takes place in Midland, and, with it, the elections that will allow us, I hope, to see the start of a new era which will give back the CAF its original goals, its noble spirit, and all the qualities it has lost during the past three years. If you haven't done that yet, please do ask for an absentee ballot as described on page 2, and use it to help rescue the CAF!

Marcel Albert has passed away. This sad piece of news will hit more than one. He was a man with outstanding kindness to whom I talked for a long time over the phone when we produced the prints based on Roy Grinnell's superb painting. It only took me a few minutes to see how much love and admiration he had for the work we accomplish within the CAF, but especially within the French Wing. I sincerely thank him for the support he gave us.

Talking about the Normandie-Niemen, I just had confirmation that the Memorial in Les Andelys will definitely close down at the end of 2010. The municipality wants the building back... Its rich collections will be donated to the Air Museum in Le Bourget which will use some of them to improve the display of the Yak 3 in the Warbirds Hall.

Bernard

PATROUILLE DE FRANCE SPECIAL ISSUE

(Pages 4 to 11)



Photo: B. Delfino

MARCEL ALBERT, ACE OF THE NORMANDIE NIEMEN WITH 24 VICTORIES, HAS PASSED AWAY AT THE AGE OF 92 (Page 2)



CAF MEMBERS, UP TO DATE WITH YOUR ANNUAL DUES, THE ELECTIONS ARE COMING SOON!... HAVE YOU ASKED FOR YOUR BALLOT? (Page 2)

DEATH OF MARCEL ALBERT ACE OF THE NEUNEU



It's with great sadness that we heard about the death of Marcel Albert on Monday August 23 in Harlingen (Texas).

With 24 victories that he got during WWII, Marcel Albert lived in the USA where he managed a chain of restaurants until he retired. After the death of his wife, thanks to Jean-Marie Garric, who built about 10 Yak replicas, Marcel lived in a retirement house in Harlingen. Roy and Irene Grinnell met him for the signature of the prints made from the painting that they donated to the French Wing.

Au revoir Marcel!...

ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL STAFF NEXT OCTOBER

We hope that all members of the French Wing and the CAF, either Life members or Regular members who are up to date with their dues, have requested an absentee ballot from Keith Lawrence, CAF Administrative Director, either by mail, fax, or email.

If this is not your case, your request must reach Keith Lawrence before October 3.

We thank all the late comers for dealing with this request without any de-

lay because these elections have never had so much value as this year! Here are their significant dates :

- **03 October**: Your request for an absentee ballot must have reached Keith Lawrence before that date.
- **08 October**: The direct vote will take place during the CAF General Assembly in Midland. **To the 5 candidates already nominated by the CAF HQ, will be added the candidates that will apply from the floor during this meeting.**
- **11 to 13 October**: Absentee Ballots will be mailed to those members who will have made the appropriate request.
- **08 November**: Your Absentee Ballot will need to arrive in Midland on that date (**Warning! All you need to do is circle the 5 candidates that you wish to elect. Do NOT mark, sign, or cross this ballot otherwise it will be invalidated !**).
- Around **16 November**: Publication of the election results.

We can only emphasize the high importance of these elections in the very difficult times the CAF is going through. This is the first chance that we have to stop the damage and get the CAF back on its tracks, the CAF we all love.

DO NOT WASTE THAT CHANCE!!!

If you haven't done so yet, and if you're up to date with your dues, send a request for an absentee ballot to :

Keith Lawrence
CAF Headquarters
PO Box 62000
Midland
TX 79711-2000
USA

email: klawrence@cafhq.org
Fax: 00 1 432 563 8046

FRENCH WING AIR SHOWS & EVENTS

Here is the list of aviation air events that the French Wing will attend this season 2010.

Should you wish to take an active part in any of these events, either to fly there (at the usual price), or to help with the PX gift shop, please make yourself known at once by Patrick, Gaël, and Bernard, specifying your needs and your intentions.

- **Pontoise**: Air show on September 5. J-3 (Static), MS 733, C 195, and Yak 18T, with the PX.
- **Lens**: Air show on September 12 (Access: free). J-3, with the PX.
- **Persan-Beaumont**: On September 18 & 19, days of national inheritance. Yak-18T, NC 856, and Piper Cub, with the PX. (Access: Free).
- **Aero-Flea Market in Le Bourget museum**: On October 2 & 3. PX only. (Access: Free).

Note: Should you wish to donate aviation related items that can be sold during these days (Aircraft parts, books, models, post cards, etc, all except magazines), thank you for sending them to us before the end of September. The product of these sales will be recorded as a donation to the French Wing under your name.

COULOMMIERS 2010

Article & photos: B. Delfino

The very tempting program that had been published for this air show was far from reality because of the bad weather that stopped several airplanes from coming, especially the Fighter Collection ones in UK. If the weather on the site was fine, it was quite different over the rest of the country. Fortunately, the planes that were present did the show which was concluded by the *Patrouille de France*, always popular and loved by all, amateurs and the public at large.

For various reasons, only two of the French Wing airplanes or their members' were able to attend the show, over the four that were planned: Didier's Yak 18T and Cédric's MS 733. The PX was there and its business was quite good because shops related to aviation were rare, which greatly helped our sales.

About 25.000 spectators greatly appreciated the show which started at 2 P.M. If it seemed to be a bit slow at times, this was caused by the absence of some planes. But there were many there and enough to make everyone happy and enjoy a nice day.

We had the privilege to get close to the PAF airplanes, which allowed us to envisage the publication of a special article about the National Aerobatics Team.

You will read this article in the following pages. Its originality includes a superb text by Christian Tournemine, a great amateur of the PAF, some superb profiles by Bertrand Brown, and many photos taken during the show, but also on the ground to show the mechanics at work, without whom all this would be impossible.

We hope to see you all on September 5 in Pontoise, in Lens on September 12, in Persan-Beaumont on September 18 & 19, and in Le Bourget for the aero-flea market!



PATROUILLE DE FRANCE



*Text: Christian Tournemine
Profiles: Bertrand Brown
Color photos: Bernard Delfino*

The origin of aerobatics goes as far back as September 1st, 1913 when **Adolphe Pégoud**, reproduced the very first loop ever done by an airplane, which he had watched perform by his pilotless Blériot plane after he had bailed out of it to test a parachute on August 19, 1913.



their planes for some more powerful aircraft, the Morane 225, this time with 5 airplanes. Simultaneously, the exploits of aerobatics pilots like **Biancotto**, **Détroyat**, **Doret** and the ladies **Maryse Hilsz** and **Hélène Boucher** filled the newspapers.

Aerobatics then became the necessary basis of aerial combat during WWI. The manoeuvres of inversion, diving, reversal, Immelman, etc, became indispensable to get behind adversary planes in order to shoot them down.

In 1931, aviation was not autonomous. It was still attached to the Army. An aerobatic team flying in formation was created in Étampes-Mondésir, with 3 Morane 230, and Capitaine **Amouroux**, Adjudant-chef **Dumas** and Adjudant-chef **Carlier**. This team was successful and changed



In 1934, the newly created Air Force's Head Quarters wished to send to an air show in Liège (Belgium), an aerobatics team made of fighter pilots of the 7th Squadron in Dijon. Commandant **Weiser** (*left*) with Officers **Barrio**, **Bertrand** and **Rebière** went to Étampes to train and learn from the team led by Lieutenant **Fleurquin**. Weiser's idea was opposed to what the Étampes team thought. In his opinion, everything had to be for the show; he went from 3 to 9 aircraft, then to 18: Nine MS 225 and nine SPAD 510 (*left center*). He decided to link

the airplanes together using some thin ropes, in groups of three. The Dijon Team became "*The Weiser Circus*".

When its leader left in 1938, the Circus closed down. Often strong personalities have so much influence on their team that when they leave, nothing can work any longer.

In the mean time, in 1937, the Étampes team moved to Salon de Provence and became "*The Air School Team*", which kept the leadership and prestige for aerobatics.

After the war, the arrival of jets put some doubts about aerobatics: Pistons and propellers shifted away! A gap between man's fragility and the machine's performance.

In 1947, the Air Ministry decided to create a Squadron to present the Air force. It was given to Capitaine Perrier who, with 12 Stampe SV4 aircraft took part in all air shows until 1951.

English and American pilots did all aerobatics with jets. They were followed by the French on Vampire and F-84. Their training took place after their normal duties every day...

The technical evolution and the growing engine power made the aerobatics displays an progressed enormously, even if one may have a different opinion about beautiful or artistic shows, aerobatics or acrobatics, the important remains the passion!

On May 17, 1953, fifty thousand people are gathered together at Alger Maison-Blanche to watch a great air show where aerobatics teams from the USA, England, Italy, and France will compete. The French team has been freshly created by the Armée de l'Air. It is led by **Commandant Lachenal**, using four F-84G *Thunderjet* belonging to the 3rd Fighter Squadron based in Reims.

DASSAULT MD-450 "OURAGAN" (1954)



DASSAULT MD-450 "OURAGAN" (1955)



DASSAULT MD-450 "OURAGAN" (1956-1)



DASSAULT MD-450 "OURAGAN" (1956-2)



FOUGA "MAGISTER" (1971)



FOUGA "MAGISTER" (1978)



ALPHA JET (1981)





The PAF often represents our country throughout the world. It flew to all 5 continents. This year, it was South America and the Antilles where, as usual, its success was immense. Very few countries have an aerobatic team which has reached that level of perfection.

New York, the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids, remain outstanding memories among many others!

The prize is a cup. The official commentator for national air shows is Jacques Noetinger who shouts, after a breathtaking demonstration "*Formidable Patrouille de France!*" while the whole public makes an ovation to the French pilots who won the competition against the others who are not demeritorious. But the choice is made, and the expression will stay, and it can be found in all newspapers the following day, in Algeria and in France.

ister, with its look and its high pitch whistling had an evident charm...

The Patrouille celebrated its Fiftieth anniversary in 2003, in Salon de Provence, its main base, during a wonderful air show where other nations' teams came to fly a friendly homage to their French colleagues.

It's the result of a permanent training. The pilots are all, basically, fighter pilots with a minimum of 1500 flying hours and the title of squadron leader. They co-opt each other: No one join the PAF without the agreement of all the others, in groups of three every year, in normal times when there is no particular problem.

THE PATROUILLE DE FRANCE IS BORN!

From 1954, the MD450 *Ouragan* follows the Thunderjet, then the *Mystère* IVA from 1957 till 1963, the CM 170 *Fouga Magister* from 1964 till 1980, and, finally, the *Alphajet* since 1981. Each plane, in its time, had advantages and drawbacks. I admit that the Fouga Mag-



The basic training lasts 6 months in Salon de Provence. The rest is spent in air shows which represent as many training sessions. Each leader takes over the existing program and brings it the modifications he wishes, after discussion with the others. He never dictates. This year, the “*Bomb with 8*” is a wonder!

The year before he takes his command, the leader is the “*Vulture*” of the current leader. He flies behind him and “smells” its fumes but also his turbulences! When one watches the videos filmed in flight, one realizes that the Alpha-jet “*Dutch-Rolls*” a lot, which calls for some very fine piloting, firm and always aware, because the planes are often 6 or 7 feet away from the others, and at about 400 Miles per hour, imagine the space in 1/100 of a second...



For some time now, we have seen on TV the pilots of the PAF rehearse the gestural “music” which allows for a



perfect coordination of the team under the orders of the leader, and the memorization of the entire display,

from the departure from the tarmac to the return to the parking area. It's very impressive. There is the main “ribbon”, and the ones of the solos, which link one figure to the other with no wasted time.

This year, for the first time ever, the leader is a lady, Commandant **Virginie Guyot** (*Left*) whom I met two years ago in Laval, when she was a “smurf” (Newcomer to the PAF) and followed

Commandant **Fabien Coulibaly**. Her kindness, her calm, her modesty, do not let anyone guess the experience and the absolute competence she has to accomplish her missions. She fought in the war in Afganistan and she was detached in N'Djamena. She know what self-control is about. She is married and the mother of a little boy whose PAF flight suit makes her smile...



When one can listen to the radio frequency the PAF uses in flight, it helps a lot to understand and anticipate the figures: The “tops” mark the changes, and when the former leaders used to say “*Cadence*” Virginie says “*I incline*”. Yes, its the same thing, but this touch of femininity gives the show an all new aspect !



ment who can take any place except the leader's).

The 2010 series, i.e. the PAF demonstration program, has been decided with the agreement of all its members. Commandant Guyot says that she took the opinion of all pilots and mechanics of the team. There is a huge experience accumulated over dozens of years, and a necessary evolution. The whole thing appears as a strength, a charm, and a beauty which are typical of the PAF.

The eight “blue, white, and red” Alphajets are lined up on the runway,

During its 57 years, the PAF paid a heavy tribute of deaths in service. Memories do not fade out among the pilots, the mechanics, and the various teams of the Armée de l'Air.

On April 13 Capitaine Sylvain Courtot had to eject during training and in difficult conditions; he only suffered slight injuries and thinks that the new ejector seat saved his life. Capitaine Antoine Monhée, replacement for last year, accepted to reintegrate the team and quickly swallowed 5 months of training in emergency (The PAF includes 8 pilots and one replace-



staggered four by four, and, over the radio, a woman's voice announces "*Athos smokes Top! Take-off Top! 100 knots, let's roll!*". The blue, white, and red smokes surrounds the Alphajets as they accelerate faster and faster and take-off.

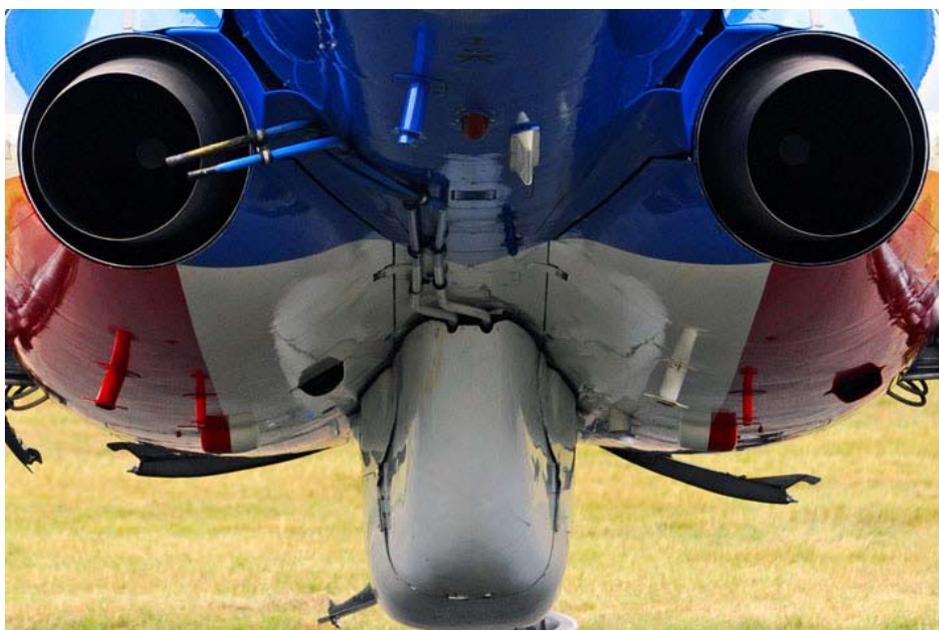
During twenty minutes the "ribbon" will unroll itself: Clover to the right, simultaneous rolls and falls, left turn, right turn, public fly-by as a dart and rolls. Then a new impressive item, the *Bomb with 8* in a dive starting as a group and bursting with each plane adopting a different heading. And then the *tunnel* which is a crossing with four planes coming from one



the group is breath-taking. They are the best! There is no gap, no waiting time like one can often see with other teams. The safety rules have become very drastic, and sometimes it shows. Not for the PAF.

These moments of pure delight are only possible thanks to the ground teams: The mechanics sit behind their pilot to move from one place to the other, or they fly aboard the accompanying *Transall* which carries spare engines and parts, together with the van of the PAF shop. The mechanics chose their pilot, there is a total and perfect osmosis between them, and one must

side and two from the other, along the public. The solos carry on with the *ticking clock*, and while the others draw a heart in the sky, one of the solos draws an arrow going through it, blue first, and then red. Then come the twist, the solos' barrel rolls, the sheriff, and the final burst which starts away from the public and facing it, and end with planes going in all directions, like a star, above the horizon. Between each of these special displays, the planes adopt various formations: Diamond, Concord, T, rhombus, etc. The planes on the outside suffer more, the corrections are a lot more severe for them, but the cohesion of





see them take care of their plane to understand that their passion is so evident! There is one air show team, and one at the base in Salon. The show director has his own Alphajet, number "0" (The number 9 is the replacement plane), and he comments the show from the ground. Finally, there is a video team who films every flight for analysis, comments, and the debriefing of the actors.

I often saw the English, the Swiss, the Moroccans, the Thunderbirds, the Blue-Angels, the Italian Frecce-tricolori, and others. There are some good ones, but I can assure



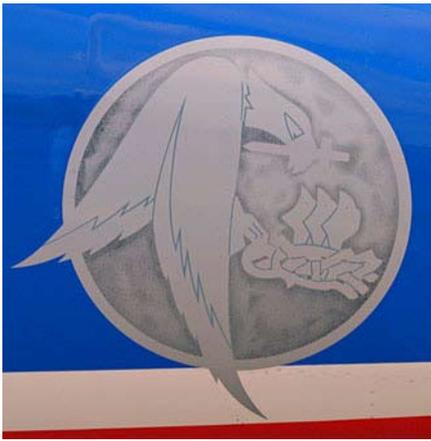
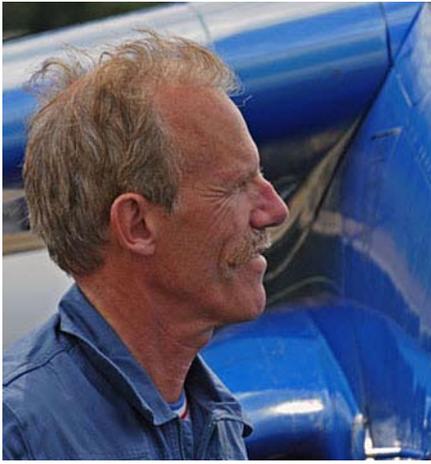
you that none equal the PAF. I have been going to air shows for 60 years...

The Godmother for 2010 is Madame **Carla Bruni-Sarkozy**, which makes, according to the Armée de l'Air monthly magazine, *Air Actualités*: "*A duet of charm and excellence*". Otherwise, the PAF is, itself, the Godmother of "*Cardiac patronage Surgery*", an association directed by professor **Francine Lecat** who saves the life of kids in the entire world.

The PAF display is an unforgettable experience in the aviation domain. I have been lucky enough to see it practically every year ever since a very very

long time, and the emotion is still the same: An unlimited admiration for its performance (When one is a pilot, he appreciates better!), for the total experience it represents, for the beauty in the sky, for those who have gone, and for such a beautiful representation of France. Yesterday in Coulommiers, tomorrow, anywhere else!...

And the throat tightened as usual, I have, in my ears, the commentator's voice which says: "*Ladies and gentlemen, the Patrouille de France salutes you!*" with the final burst and the whistle of the jet engines in the smoke of our three colors.



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FRENCH WING PX



Print of the *Spirit of Lewis* flying over Le Plessis-Belleville, from the painting made by Roy Grinnell.

300 grammes, non-acid, high quality paper, size 30 x 40 cm.

The price for this lithograph is 10 euros for Wing members (+ 6€ P & P), and 15euros for the public (+ 6€ de port).

Our members residing in the USA may order from Irene & Roy Grinnell in order to avoid excessive P & P (buywrbons@aol.com).

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