

THE DAY AFTER THE PERFECT SHOW

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Talking about pleasures: Aspects which are part of the complete 'operation' around an airshow are of course the arrival, but even more 'The Day After', when all airplanes depart after the show to their home destination again. This is what the spectators of the show have to miss, but when you live to see this as reporter it brings you so many nice details that come extra to a show like this. Guys of importance such a day are the platform masters, as one can see they do their jobs professional but also with humor ! It's a job which can be compared with a traffic agent on the streets, though the objects are some larger and have to be handled with even more care ! What to think of the AWACS, you cannot afford to sweep away any object with these large wings, and when the jets appear and taxi between all objects, activities and people it would be a bit embarrassing when someone suddenly 'disappears' in a jet-engine ! Or what to think of the mighty helicopters such as the Czech and Hungarian Mil Mi-24 battlefield helicopters ! On the show they demonstrate their skills by even flying backwards and making loopings, but all in safe distance of the crowds. Staying quite next to these machines like the Mi-8 / 17 's with full throttle on the engines and rotorblades sweeping along it gives a mighty and powerful environment that's for sure.

Teams of all nations work together and prepare their flight home after so many checks and re-checks, fuelling-up, preparing cockpits, complete checklists for equipment, loading instructions and believe it, it's a complete circus such a day. To give an impression, as reporter / photographer you cannot have a break sometimes for an hour because of the busy activities. It's like a beehive, and you must have earned the trust in the past by the organisation ever to be on the platforms, respecting all written and unwritten safety rules. The pictures of this article sure give you a 'look behind the curtains' of a day that characterises itself for high standards of safety, busy platform traffic and safe home-returns for all planes, crews and accompanying personell on 'The Day After'.

THE PERFECT SHOW

Perhaps as an aviation enthusiast you have asked yourself the question once: 'Does the perfect Airshow exist' ? The answer to that question probably must be a no, because it can always be done better. Though when visiting the 16th Czech International AIR FEST 2009, we must come to the conclusion that for 99% the organisation did a very, very well job.

And besides that Hradec Kralove is an old airbase, it does have at it's disposal facilities that meet the strictest international traffic requirements. The proof of that we could witness during the airshow and certainly the 'Day After'. To host an AWACS plane from Geilenkirchen Germany appears to be no problem, the runway suits fine and the communications as well. Reason for the organisation to do this CIAF on Hradec Kralove again was that Brno is also a very busy airfield, as well as the problem of hosting the great variety of different aircraft on the platforms. For all (photographing) spectators also a real treat because Hradec Kralove brings the sun 'in the back'.

PERFORMING THE SHOW

As organisation you invite certain planes, airforces, civil participants and companies. When they cannot make it after all finally, these are matters that you cannot avoid in any way. But when you entered the Hradec Kralove Airshow this year as visitor you must come to the conclusion it was a very well organised event. To begin with, the program was executed in

the right order, there were no long waiting times for the public and all separate components were executed precisely in a tight time-table. It was offered a variety of planes and helicopters, in the air as well as on static displays. We can compliment the organisation once more because what you didn't see at the Royal International Air Tattoo in England, you could find here: Three UK Harriers on a row !

BACK TO THE ROOTS

Hradec Kralove has a rich history and it can rank itself between the many prestigious events in many different countries in Europe. Next to for instance the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic has a warm-hearted population in general when it comes to aviation, for still many persons that is because of the wartime heroes of World War II. The CIAF (Czech International Air Fest) is also seen as a tribute to the aviators who fought the Nazism. On the other hand nowadays a show like this is a perfect opportunity for all the man and women to show their capabilities with modern equipment and up-to-date avionics. The pilots and technicians are more or less integrated in their machines, men and machine have to be one to do their jobs well. In real for instance we can look back to the 'Baltic Air Policing 2009' in Lithuania (four months) where the Czech Armed Forces 1st contingent JAS-Gripen lived to see and just ended the very first deployment in tactical assets in modern history. Modern avionics in supersonic planes rule the air today where you can conclude that 'time sure flies'. where the airshow came back to it's roots from Brno to the former military Hradec Kralove Airfield this year, building on the tradition that once existed from the times of the Czechoslovak Republic.

BETWEEN HELICOPTER AND AWACS

Also helicopter pilots of the less 'speedy' machines demonstrated that they know to show flying professionalism as artists, as surgeons in an operation room. Combat aircraft showed their skills in a simulated airbase assault, aerobatic pilots like the Polish Iskra team or Breitling team showed their almost unbelievable figures flying in jet-airplanes with only three meters distance between the wing tips. The pictures in this article give you an small impression what you missed when you didn't visit, and for those who did it will be a nice review.

Walking along the field the first ones that draw the attention are the Boeing KC-135 and the huge AWACS from Geilenkirchen lined up next to the tower. Also a line of the red-white Polish Iskra team and supporting aircraft looks so nice, they gave acte-de-presence to underline the professionalism of Polish Airforce with a perfect demonstration and as other stuntteam by the way we could enjoy the only private non-military stuntteam with their six Aero L-39C's of Breitling. Deputy Joint Forces Commander Verner, Chief of Staff of the Czech Air Force, stated what he also wrote in the Airshow booklet: 'I'm sure that you will enjoy the skill of the pilots and that visitors both young and old will bring home unforgettable experiences.' The wish of Mr. Premysl Sobotka (parliament senate chairman of the Czech Republic) also came to reality. He wished the Airfest organisation and public at Hradec Kralove great weather, an interesting programme, and many satisfied visitors of all ages. And that was exactly what we got ! The Perfect Show ! May 2010 be of even great pleasure !

SEE YOU NEXT SHOW ?

It's a more than respectable noise you're in for many hours and wearing earplugs or a sound barrier is an absolute must not to damage your hearing. After all airplanes left, all in- and external catering and servicing companies have left there is still a lot of work to do. All fences

and security facilities have to be removed and finally the complete airfield will be screened by many soldiers to look for any objects left on the concrete or the grass that might be of danger later on for any aircraft jet-engine. The team of Czech International Air Fest did a great job and succeeded in trying to organise 'The Perfect Show' & Day After'.

If you ever plan to visit such a show for two days for the first time, be sure to make your reservation in time ! Up to 150.000 visitors at this kind of shows guarantee that almost no Hotelroom or apartment will be found very near the airfield at the last moment !

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