

April 20, 2018 - The Vero Beach Blues... Angels that is

It is unusual, for me at least, to be able to attend two air shows just a week apart. However I took up the offer from a pilot acquaintance to join him and some aviation friends at his hangar at the Vero Beach Airport, which would offer some excellent viewing of this annual event. This year the Navy's Blue Angels would be performing and that would be something that I would greatly enjoy seeing. While the actual show was scheduled for the weekend it was mentioned that there would be practice performances on both the Thursday and Friday prior, when there would be no admission charged. I selected Friday and, as it turned out, this was a good choice as this was more like a "dress rehearsal" when all parties went through their paces, including the show's announcer. In essence, I got the "full Monty" without the large crowds and in what turned out to be perfect weather conditions... bright blue skies and light winds. Adjacent is a photo of me along with some of the early arrivals (more than a dozen eventually showed up). My host, Bob Lund, is in the front row intently viewing the proceedings while I am in the 2nd row, furthest away. Bob is a retired airline captain and fly's his homebuilt Van's RV8. Bob also did some air-show aerobatic performing of his own and is an excellent pilot in his own right.



Not only did we have the perfect spot to view the proceedings, located just a few hundred yards from the flight-line, but, in addition, there was large tree who's shade made for comfort during the afternoon's mid 80 degree temperatures. Actually the only people who might have had a better view of the show were those who were able to gather on the upper deck of the field's control tower... but they did not have the shade that our big tree offered.



As is the case with almost all air shows, Patriotism is not shied away from... it is embraced. All shows start off with a skydiving team doing their own version of aerial maneuvers and with a display of a very large flag by one of those parachutists. This is accompanied to the playing of the National Anthem during which all stand and place their hands or caps over their hearts. This was the values and principals that I grew up with in the 1950's and it is alive and well at air shows today. So many of the pilots that both attend and perform at these events are ex-military and appreciate and respect the flag that they fought for. It is always a moving experience.

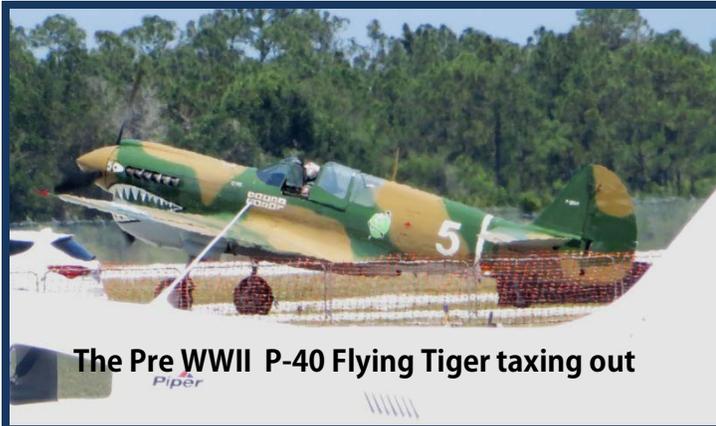
Prior to the main event there was the usual compliment of air show performers and ancillary. While each had its own story and activity highlight I was a bit too far away from the speakers to clearly follow the running commentary, so I am simply presenting some of my photos with minimum verbiage. Just be aware that the camera that I use is a highly unsophisticated point and shoot and the action is often distant and fast. So my photos are often not even near professional quality. But they do capture the moment and do offer a bit of documentation on the activity at the airshow & the pilots and aircraft that always make it such a special event.



An Army C-130 cargo carrier inbound for landing



Sasquatch, a jet powered Waco bi-plane



The Pre WWII P-40 Flying Tiger taxiing out



Post Vietnam War F-16 "Fighting Falcon" AKA "Viper") taking off with afterburner lit



The Flying Tiger and Viper performing together



The GEICO WWII SNJ-2 "Sky-typer" airplane



The Sky-typers "write" messages in the sky



Half of the GEICO team emitting smoke



The WWII Navy carrier based Helldiver taking off



This SB2C Curtiss Helldiver bomber in a turn

And, now for the Main Event - The Navy Precision Flight Drill Team - The Blue Angels



The F-18 Super Hornet getting ready to taxi



Blue Angels Hornet #5 in take-off power climb



Flight of 4 in a slow gear down fly-by



Two upright and two inverted - which is which?

It depends on which way you view the photo



The criss-cross maneuver performed at 450 MPH by each aircraft, or a 900 MPH closure rate



5 of the 6 Super Hornets in a close fly-by



All 6 of the Blue Angels getting ready to perform their signature fleur-de-lis separation