



FLIGHT-WATCH



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A Twenty-One Hour Odyssey

I.

An Early Morning Departure

Our cadre of Oshkosh adventurers reported to Epps Air Service at PDK around 04:00 for an early morning departure in Milo Pinckney's Navajo for a trip to Oshkosh returning later the same day or so we planned. Besides Milo, our cast of characters included Merry Waldroup, Mac Se-cord, Russ Jamieson, Jeff Heal and the author. With Milo as PIC and Jeff as co-pilot, we were airborne by 04:30. En route to Lexington, Kentucky we were on top of most of the clouds at 10,000 feet. However, there was moderate rain along our path requiring a westerly deviation. The weather at Lexington was reported as seven hundred overcast requiring the obligatory ILS approach into Lexington. We landed at about 06:30 for gas and to stretch our legs.

Jeff suggested I fly right seat on the next leg with Milo. So, I dutifully copied our IFR clearance and worked the radios while Milo did a fine job of flying the plane. Since we did not have an IFR reservation for Oshkosh, we had to amend our destination to Fond du Lac with the understanding we would cancel our IFR flight plan en route and proceed directly to Oshkosh VFR. As we flew

north, the weather cooperated, and soon we were in clear VFR conditions. Eventually, I hand flew the aircraft while Milo worked the radios. As we approached Chicago, we reviewed the Oshkosh arrival procedures and decided the Fisk Arrival would suit our purposes. We approached the town of Fisk from the south, monitored the Oshkosh Approach frequency and were instructed to follow the railroad track for Runway 27. Due to radio frequency saturation, we had to get resequenced for Runway 36 Right. After landing, it took one hour to taxi to our tie down spot.

II.

Lunch and AeroShell Square

In no time at all we were on the bus that would take us near the war-bird tie down area so we could pay for our admission. With our wristbands in hand, we hopped on a tram, and in no time we were having lunch on a beautiful day in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. We engaged in the usual pilot banter including one or more lawyer jokes before we made our way to survey the Airbus 380.

Survey is an appropriate verb to describe how one views an Airbus 380. It is gigantic. We walked about the monster and marveled at its size. I had to catch up with some old friends and got separated from the

rest of the group which was no problem, since we had a pre-arranged rendezvous time of 18:00 at the Navajo.

Canadian Vintage Wings had a number of spectacular aircraft on display at AeroShell Square including a Spitfire, Hurricane, P-40, a Corsair and a Lysander. These aircraft were in pristine condition with authentic paint schemes. The Canadian contingent working to support the appearance of these planes consisted of a very cordial and polite group of men and women. I bought some articles from them including some T-shirts and a hat.

III. Other Friends From Atlanta

I ran into Steve Champness, the President of the Atlanta Aero Club at AeroShell Square, and we made our way to the Honda Jet display. In time, Jack Pelton, the President of Cessna Aircraft Company drove by on a golf cart. As he did, Scott Drucker, a Pilatus aircraft salesman with Epps Air Service appeared and we discussed the state of the economy and aircraft sales. An impromptu photo session took place and Jack was on his way to give a talk. If you want to network in the aviation community, Oshkosh is a great place to do it.



IV. The Warbird Ramp and More of the Show

Scott and I left Steve to survey the warbird tie down area. Scott wanted to look at some Soviet block aircraft, so we parted company. Three P-40 aircraft (one in AVG colors) and Ron Fagen's P-38 *Ruff Stuff* were of interest and warranted a number of photographs before I enlisted Sue, a Delta Air Lines flight attendant driving a golf cart, to give me a ride around the perimeter of the airport near Basler Aviation where the Navajo was parked.

Arriving back at the Navajo, our Atlanta contingent was sitting in the grass enjoying the air show including a number of large formations of aircraft and pyrotechnics that made for an entertaining afternoon. The formations included AT-6/SNJ Texans, T-28 Trojans and P-51 Mustangs flew overhead amidst the pyrotechnic explosions. Also overflying the explosive activities on the ground was an OV-1 Mohawk, an F-86 Sabre and a gaggle of L-39 Albatross jets, among others.

I spotted an L-4 observation plane across the way outside a hangar and remembered that Jim Busha, the Editor of the EAA Warbird magazine owned an L-4. So I walked over to the hangar next to the L-4 and introduced myself to Jim. We had worked together for

some time, and this was a good opportunity to finally meet each other.

V. Winging Our Way Home

By 18:30 local time the air show was over and we had loaded the aircraft and taxied out for departure. Fortunately, it did not take an hour to get airborne and we were winging our way to Cincinnati, our fuel stop on the trip back to Atlanta.

Our arrival in Cincinnati provided a moment of levity as Jeff landed the Navajo with a pronounced nose up attitude, and we kidded him about making a three point landing.

While the plane was being fueled, Milo checked the weather at PDK which had a zero temperature/dewpoint spread. However, the sky was clear with six miles visibility. The obvious concern was fog setting in; so we got underway. As we flew to PDK, the visibility dropped to four miles, so we shot the ILS and landed about 01:00 a.m. Saturday.



VI. Conclusion

Our twenty-one hour odyssey to, from and at Oshkosh had been a very stimulating experience. As the saying goes, "Life is a journey," and our Oshkosh experience validated that statement. Everyone had a great time, and we were grateful for the fact that Americans enjoy the remarkable freedoms we experienced on this trip.

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