



Left: This mixed formation of Hornets, Super Hornets and a Hawkeye was something a bit different for Oceana's Fleet Fly-by. Neil Pearson

Below: Coming towards the end of his last season as the F-22 Demo Team pilot, Maj Paul 'Max' Moga performed as part of the Oceana 'Twilight Show'. Neil Pearson



Fleet Fly-by and Air Power Demonstration. Traditionally, these aircraft would return in one mass formation but there was a slight change this year with six in a delta formation and the welcome sight of a Hawkeye tucked in behind them. Friday's media show also saw a refuelling demonstration between an F/A-18F and an F/A-18C, but a serviceability problem denied the public an opportunity to witness it.

The Verdict

On paper, the show had too many Hornets, but it made a welcome change from F-16s!

Oceana

Event: NAS Oceana Airshow 2008

Venue: Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia, USA

Date: Friday 19-Sunday 21 September 2008

Reporter: Neil Pearson

It's now two years since NAS Oceana became a Hornet-only zone, and the 2008 airshow certainly cemented that fact with 21 of the strike fighters due to take to the skies. This was the 50th airshow to be held at the Master Jet Base since 1953, and continued the tried and tested format of recent seasons, attracting a total audience of over 265,000.

The weekend began with the Friday evening 'Twilight Show' which included performances from the US Navy F/A-18F Super Hornet, Canadian AF CF-188, USAF F-22 Raptor and a JATO take-off from the Blue Angels C-130. Unfortunately, blustery

conditions resulted in the cancellation of some civilian acts and the fireworks finale. Strong winds and low cloud also plagued the Saturday show to the extent that the Fleet Fly-by was cancelled. However, the conditions were perfect for the fast jets to squeeze every drop of moisture out of the air.

The CF-188 allowed for an interesting comparison between its routine and those of the US Navy Hornet and Super Hornet. Whilst the latter concentrated on tactical manoeuvres, the Canadian Hornet was more akin to the aerobatic style of the Swiss and Spanish displays, for example. Rounding off the US Navy

involvement was the return of the E-2C Hawkeye, missing from last year's show due to operational commitments and, of course, the Blue Angels. Participation from the USAF was on a smaller scale than previous years but nonetheless impressive. A C-17A was thrown around the skies within the confines of the airfield boundary, while the F-22 was even more extraordinary than last year, reminding the many European spectators what they had missed at RIAT.

Sunday's display was similar in content to Saturday, but a noticeable reduction in wind speeds allowed for the mass launch of 12 Hornets and Super Hornets for the