

# MIDWEST FLYER

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## Thunder Holds Off For 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Air Show



A drainage ditch on the east side of the runway enables John Mohr to mystify air show fans as he performs in his Stock Stearman.

**15** years of continuous airshow productions is a major milestone for any community, and Manitowoc, Wisconsin, can be proud of its accomplishment. The 2007 production of “Thunder on the Lakeshore” was held June 2-3, near the shores of Lake Michigan at Manitowoc County Airport (MTW). Despite cloudy, foggy and intermittently rainy weather, over 30,000 dedicated airshow fans showed up, down from a record 47,000 spectators last year for the two-day event.

The all-star lineup of performers included Patty Wagstaff, flying her Cirrus-sponsored Extra 300. Wagstaff is not only an Oshkosh regular, but also a three-time National Aerobatic Champion (1991, '92, '93), and three-time Top U.S. Medal Winner at the 1990, '91 and '94 World Aerobatic Championships.

Award-winning barnstormer John Mohr appeared for his 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, flying a 220 hp PT-17 Stock Stearman in blue and yellow U.S. Army Air Corps colors.

Fowler Cary also made his 14<sup>th</sup> appearance at the Manitowoc show in his shiny, silver T-33 jet fighter painted in U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds colors.

Other civilian performers included Steve Oliver in his de Havilland Chipmunk; Suzanne-Asbury Oliver in the Pepsi Skywriter; former F-14 Top Gun pilot and squadron commander, Dale Snodgrass, in the P-51 Mustang “Excalibur;” and Wisconsin native, Dr. Bill Blank of La Crosse, Wis., in his factory-sponsored Super Decathlon, which was manufactured by American Champion Aircraft in Rochester, Wisconsin.

Thundering military demonstrations were performed by the U.S. Air Force F-16 and U.S. Navy F/A-18 demonstration teams. In addition, Dale Snodgrass performed the USAF Heritage Flight flying a P-51 Mustang alongside the F-16.

Phil Dacy of Harvard, Illinois, was the announcer, and Wayne Boggs of Tampa, Fla., was the air boss.

### The Vintage Aircraft Lineup

One of the stars of the static lineup included the B-25 Mitchell bomber,



Geoff Sobering



Geoff Sobering

(TOP) Patty Wagstaff makes a high-speed pass in her Cirrus-sponsored Extra 300. (CENTER) Dale Snodgrass performs the “Heritage Flight” in a P-51 Mustang with a U.S. Air Force F-16 Falcon.

“Pacific Prowler.” The aircraft was a focal point for a special tribute to the 440<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing out of Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport, which had supported the Manitowoc airshow for many years. The 440<sup>th</sup> was consolidated due to government cutbacks.

Another big attraction was the 1937 Douglas DC-3, “Flagship Detroit.” The aircraft went into service with American Airlines in 1937. The plane is reminiscent of the old North Central “Blue Goose” aircraft that once served Manitowoc County Airport. Forty-five minute sightseeing flights were available for spectators for \$150 a ticket.

In addition to the daytime events, the early mornings and evenings were filled with hot air balloons. On Saturday night, there was a free “Balloon Glow” along the riverfront in downtown Manitowoc – tethered balloons are inflated and lit up from the inside by the flames of their burners. It was supplemented with food vendors and a band. A nighttime

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## MANITOWOC AIR SHOW FROM PAGE 4

aircraft-launched pyro flight by Steve Oliver had to be scrubbed at the last minute due to an unexpected fog bank that rolled in off Lake Michigan and reduced visibility to less than a mile. Airshow staff and performers enjoyed the event from a party across the river at the Maritime Museum, home to an actual WWII submarine floating in the river. Manitowoc was well known for its submarine production in WWII.

Although it was difficult with all of the evening festivities, early risers who got to the airport near the crack of dawn Saturday and Sunday morning were greeted with balloons rising from the tarmac and floating over the city. A little later in the morning, you could get a great pancake breakfast cooked by EAA Chapter 383 volunteers.

Airshow chairman Curt Drumm credits the success of the show to his airshow committee. Some 45 people work year-round on the show, and over 400 people work the weekend of the event. "Thanks to them," said Drumm, "everything went smoothly and there were no major headaches the entire weekend."

Drumm also noted that without their corporate sponsors, the show would not go on! Drumm said that they had



B-25 Mitchell bomber, "Pacific Prowler."



1937 Douglas DC-3, "Flagship Detroit."

a much wider geographical base than ever before. Thunder on the Lakeshore is turning into much more of a regional show. Major sponsors this year included First National Bank of Manitowoc, Holy Family Memorial Hospital, Baileigh Industrial, US Cellular, AT&T Yellow Pages, AvFuel, Kwik Trip Stores, the Herald Times Reporter, WOMT/WQTC Radio, and WCUB/WLTU Radio. Production support was garnered from throughout the state, including the 128th Fighter Wing of the Wisconsin Air National Guard in Madison, Wis.; the Wisconsin Air National Guard Combat Readiness Training Center at Volk Field, Camp Douglas, Wis.; and Austin Straubel International Airport, Green Bay, Wis. Drumm and other members of the committee pulled out all stops to produce what will be remembered as Manitowoc's finest airshow event ([www.thunderonthelakeshore.com](http://www.thunderonthelakeshore.com)). Plans are under-way for next year's event, slated for June 7-8, 2008. □

## Thunder On The Lakeshore Met All Expectations!

by Geoff Sobering

MANITOWOC, WIS. – The weekend of June 2-3 was a busy one for airshow aficionados in the Midwest. Davenport, Iowa and Rockford, Illinois, both had large airshows, headlined by the Thunderbirds and Blue Angels respectively. While I enjoy the experience of the big jet teams, I headed north to the "Thunder on the Lakeshore" airshow at Manitowoc County Airport (MTW), Manitowoc, Wis.

It's easy to explain why Manitowoc is one of my favorite shows. Curt Drumm and his organizers always put together a great event with lots of variety, everybody is tremendously friendly, the venue is nearly perfect, and the Birch Creek Inn is a wonderful (and inexpensive) place to stay over a long weekend. As a fan of fly-ins and airshows, what more could I want?

Let my photography in this issue of *Midwest Flyer Magazine* bring you one step closer to attending Thunder on the Lakeshore in 2008. □

## Light Sport Aircraft MAINTENANCE



by Joe Rethmeier

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Joe Rethmeier has completed the 120-hour Light Sport Repairman-Maintenance Course, and the 19-hour courses for LSA Weight Shift Control (trikes) and LSA Powered Parachutes through Rainbow Aviation Services of Corning, Calif. Mr. Rethmeier is now one of the first licensed Light Sport Aircraft technicians in the United States, and the first in Minnesota.

\* Special LSA are delivered turnkey flyable from a manufacturer, and meet certain ASTM "consensus standards."