Beat: News

Air Show Atlantic 2023 Warbirds Over Debert

Canadian Forces Snowbirds Interview

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USPA NEWS - The Canadian Forces Snowbirds 431 Squadron is the Canadian military's air demonstration team. The Squadron is based in Saskatchewan at 15 Wing CFB Moose Jaw. The Snowbirds consist of a fleet of the Tudor CT-114 aircraft. For more than 50 years, the Snowbirds have brought millions of Canadians together for thrilling air show displays as well as supporting the nation during hard times with the presence of their iconic jets.

On August 25, 2023, while the Snowbirds team were staging at the Halifax Stanfield International Airport (CYHZ) in preparation for Air Show Atlantic's 2023 Warbirds Over Debert production, I had the pleasure of chatting with Public Affairs Officer, Captain Philip Rochon and Snowbird 4 First Line Astern, Captain Patrice Powis-Clement. This Media Day conversation provided some insight about the team's mission and Tudor CT-114 aircraft.

Captain Philip Rochon started by outlining the Canadian Forces Snowbirds mission. " To be ambassadors for the Canadian Military. The goal is to show the skill, professionalism and team work that not only makes up the Snowbirds team, but the entire armed forces." Captain Patrice Powis-Clement also emphasized that skill, professionalism, and team work needed to to keep the team in the air.

I asked Captain Rochon how many shows that the Snowbirds perform in a typical air show season and he told me that it normally varies from year to year, but in 2023 the demonstration team performed 24 Canadian shows along with 2 in the United States. Captain Powis-Clement pointed out that some of the other military demonstration teams throughout North America may do more domestic and international shows, however those teams have newer jets that can travel faster therefore having the capability to make it to more destinations is less time than the Snowbirds would take to do the same schedule.

Due to operational requirements the interview had to be cut short, but
in his closing remarks Captain Rochon mentioned that the Snowbirds demonstration team was founded 53 years ago and have used the Tudor CT-114 exclusively since the beginning. He went on to say that there are 20 CT-114 jets in the current fleet and that the 2023 team is flying 8 jets along with one spare used by team coordinators.

For many generations, the Snowbirds have shared a message of inspiration and patriotism that has been woven into the fabric of what unites Canadians as a vast and diverse nation that is recognized around the world.

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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