

Beat: Entertainment

Air Show Atlantic 25, June 28th and 29th, Summerside PEI

CF-18 Tactical Demonstration, Interview

Summerside, Prince Edward Island , 03.07.2025, 15:10 Time

USPA NEWS - Since the early 80's, the CF-18 has been a fan favorite throughout the air show circuit. It has thrilled audiences from coast to coast with heart stopping, jaw dropping, and precisely executed performances. Decades later, the CF-18 Hornet still attracts thousands of enthusiastic fans to local air shows each season.

On Friday, November 24th, the Royal Canadian Air Force announced the absence of a CF-18 Hornet Demonstration Team during the 2025 air show season. Instead of the traditional CF-18 Demo aerobatic display, the 2025 air show season would feature a tactical display from an active CF-18, focusing on specific combat capabilities of this aircraft. The Royal Canadian Air Force released the following statement , "The Royal Canadian Air Force is on the cusp of a period of modernization not seen since the Second World War, impacting nearly every fleet of aircraft and all members of the organization. The RCAF's fighter force is no exception as it transitions to the fifth-generation CF-35A.

The Air Show Atlantic 2025 event took place in Summerside, Prince Edward Island on June 28th and June 29th, and on June 26th, which was Media Day, I had the opportunity to interview CF-18 Tactical Pilot, Captain Laurent Dussault "Sista", who shared his perspective on this year's CF-18 Tactical Display. As Captain Dussault and I walked down the length of the Hot Ramp, he looked at his CF-18 with a great sense of pride, stating that he has flown the CF-18 for the last 7 years, including two deployments in Romania and a NATO Air Policing mandate.

I initiated the conversation by asking "Sista" what drove his decision to fly the CF-18? With evident pride, he shared that his experiences in flying commercial bush planes in the far northern parts of Canada, though fulfilling, he sought after more. He continued by stating that the thrill of flying and the acceleration is what attracted him to the fighter fleet. He was quick to assert that flying a fighter jet is a unique experience, providing an unmatched sense of freedom.

I asked Captain Dussault to elaborate on the differences Air Show fans could expect to see between the planned Tactical Display and the display normally provided by the CF-18 Demo. "Sista" clarified that the Tactical Display would demonstrate capabilities and maneuvers typical of day-to-day operations, unlike the demo display, which aims to dazzle the audience. We will witness more "touch and go's" from the CF-18, low and fast approaches, and basic maneuvers used in daily fighter operations. Additionally, he emphasized that the Tactical Jet and pilot are both actively serving and are always on standby for rapid deployment.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-25818/air-show-atlantic-25-june-28th-and-29th-summerside-pei.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSiV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Brian Teepell, USPA 24 News

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619