

JETS INVADE PORT!

Story and photography
by Craig Justo



Contrasting jet trainers, Strikemaster and Albatross.



Judy Pay brought her pristine former Royal Rhodesian Air Force Vampire up from Victoria.



The Hart Flying Fighters Museum Sea Fiery from Archerfield provided piston power from the early jet age.



The HARS Neptune is always a crowd pleaser and one of Australia's few active warbird bombers.

The weekend of November 3-4, 2002 was a significant occasion for the Australian Warbird movement as the organisers of the "Fighters Over Port" Air Show hosted a spectacular event at Port Macquarie, a picturesque, tourist orientated town on the central New South Wales coast. Those who patronised this veritable smorgasbord of Warbird aviation witnessed the largest gathering of privately owned jet powered Warbirds to be seen together at any one time on an Australian airfield. Port Macquarie and its surrounding environs echoed to the sounds of a large variety of high performance aero engines and especially those that run on aviation turbine fuel. The "kero burning" component of the Australian Warbird movement has been growing steadily over the past decade and the Australian Civil Aircraft Register details forty aircraft spread through nine different manufacturers as having been allocated a VH registration mark. Of those, twenty-two machines are currently airworthy with many of the remainder very close to attaining airworthy status. Whereas the Fighters Over Port Air Show had a strong focus on jet powered aircraft, as would be expected, these were outnumbered by a large variety of piston-engined, propeller driven Warbirds that also took part in the displays. Adding a third dimen-



The colourful L-29 Delphin has been proving very popular at recent Australian airshows.

sion to the mix of aircraft was the HARS P2V-7 Neptune which, besides the two Wright R-3350 turbo-compound radial engines, was originally configured with two Westinghouse J-34 turbo-jet engines. Eight "kero burners" were in attendance and these provided an impressive variety of individual and formation routines, the latter being themed around the less than chivalrous rivalry that once abounded between Western, Soviet Bloc and Soviet aligned countries during the "Cold War" years. The gathering of "kero burners" provided a rare opportunity to compare at close quarters, the differences in technology that were applied to the development of jet powered aircraft over a twenty year period. Those comparisons were able to be made through the products of manufacturers that are synonymous with the former Soviet Bloc - Mikoyan MIG-15UTI (1947) to the Aero Vodochy L-39 Albatros (1968) and those emanating from the West - De Havilland DH-115 Vampire (1943) to the Cessna A-37B Dragonfly (1963). The "Fighters Over Port" event was well patronised and by all reports, hugely successful with current planning for it all to be done again in two years time.

OVERLEAF: Something you don't see every day - a Jet Provost JP-5 accompanied by two Strikemasters and an L-39. The jets are certainly here to stay and airshow crowds just love them!



Recently refurbished by Red Star Aviation, Egon Mabr's Nanchang CJ-6a looks striking in its desert camouflage.



More jet variety. The MiG-15 and Strikemaster rub shoulders with an Australian license-built BAE Hawk of the RAAF.



Looking very aggressive coming in low over the coast is the Hart's Flying Fighters Museum Yak-3 flown by Nigel Arnot.