

Snowbirds



History of the

SNOWBIRDS





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Introduction

The 431 Air Demonstration Squadron, also known as the Royal Canadian Air Force Snowbirds, has thrilled audiences of all ages across North America with its precision formation aerobatic demonstrations for nearly half a century. Consisting of a team of active duty RCAF members, the Snowbirds are the first Canadian aerial demonstration team to be designated as a squadron. These courageous men and women of the RCAF proudly serve as ambassadors of their country when performing in the United States, always promoting the best of Canadian military aviation. Demonstrating the skill, professionalism, and teamwork that is essential in achieving such impressive precision flying techniques, the Snowbirds proudly uphold the Canada Air Demonstration Team's legacy of aviation excellence.

With a trademark combination of close formations and precision flying, the RCAF Snowbirds have been performing since 1971. Flying 11 distinctive Canadair CT-114 Tutor aircraft, produced specifically as pilot jet trainers between 1963 and 2000, the 431 Air Demonstration Squadron is made up of 11 pilots and 80 Canadian Forces personnel, including technicians, engineers and essential support staff. Together, the Snowbirds demonstrate the prominence and capabilities of the Canadian Forces.

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History

Ever since Canadian aviation pioneer John Alexander Douglas (J.A.D.) McCurdy piloted the nation's first powered aircraft, the *Silver Dart*, over Nova Scotia's Baddeck Bay in 1909, airplanes throughout the last century have played a significant role in Canadian history. Fascinated with the thrilling performances and barnstorming feats of these daredevils at local aerial circuses, Canadian spectators simply could not get enough. And thus the era of the air show had arrived.

Demonstrating courage and prowess, aerial performance teams like the RCAF "Golden Hawks" and the "Golden Centennaires" displayed exciting public air displays featuring Canadair CT-114 Tutor jet trainers. Demand grew from patriotic audiences for a military aerobatics team that would both delight and impress with the Canadair CT-114's sensational aerial capabilities.

Enter, the Snowbirds.

A namesake inspired by the CT-114 aircraft's distinctive white and red paint scheme, the Snowbirds—based in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan—were established in 1971. Officially designated the "431 Air Demonstration Squadron" of the Royal Canadian Air Forces in 1978, the Snowbirds have continued to captivate audiences throughout the decades with their breathtaking aerobatic performances, serving as a proud symbol of national pride. Today, nearly 50 years since their formation, the Snowbirds continue to demonstrate the highest level of synchronized precision, discipline, dedication and military aviation excellence inherent in the brave men and women of the RCAF.

SPECIFICATIONS

CT-114 Tutor



It would take a distinctive aircraft to proudly serve the Snowbirds, the RCAF's famed 431 Air Demonstration Squadron. Procured in the early 1960s from Canadair Limited of Montreal as a RCAF jet trainer, the CT-114 Tutor had the power and precision capabilities the Snowbirds squadron required to perform such extraordinary aerobatic feats. The original Tutor trainers had an end-to-end length of 9.75 m and a wingspan of 11.12 m. Built with a General Electric J85-CAN-40 Turbojet engine with 2,650 lbs. of thrust capability (allowing for sustained 2G turns at 25,000 ft.), the Tutor had a maximum speed of 741 km/h and a flight range of 648 km. Slightly modified from their training versions to become formation aerobatic capable, the Tutors flown by the Snowbirds allow for solo operation and inverted flight maneuverability.

Of the 212 CT-114 Tutor jet trainers built, just over twenty remain in service today, flown exclusively by the men and women of the Royal Canadian Forces Snowbirds.



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