

For the first time at the Waukegan Air Show, the Snowbirds of the Royal Canadian Air Force performed at the Wings Over Waukegan last weekend.

Their formations were incredibly tight and the wings of their airplanes overlapped by 4 feet, according to the announcer.

About 25,000 to 30,000 people attended the Air Show, making it the largest crowd they've had, according to Grant Farrell of Wings Over Waukegan.

The Snowbirds came to town in 11 planes, and flew nine of them in the show.

"We have more at home," Captain Thomas Edelson, public affairs officer said. They took advantage of one of the extra planes when one of the scheduled planes wasn't performing up to standards. They also brought a truck filled with spare parts.

The Snowbirds have flown in the Chicago and Oshkosh air shows as well as others around the country.

They have appeared in some shows with the Blue Angels and the pilots enjoy taking one another up in their own planes, Edelson said. The planes are similar but they each do some things differently which makes it interesting for them.

"The Blue Angels have appeared at Prince Edward Island so it's good to reciprocate," Edelson said.

The aerobatics performed in the show were originated from airplane fighting maneuvers, he said. The pilots and their planes arrived on Thursday from Toronto. The Canadian consulate from Chicago attended the show.

The pilots stayed in the area until Tuesday morning which allowed students from McCall School in Waukegan to see the planes up close.

The pilots were planning on taking advantage of some of the local golf



These three planes fly so closely they almost appears to be one.

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courses, Great America, going into Chicago and other activities when not practicing or performing.

The Snowbird planes

The planes were designed and built in Canada by Canadair in the 1960s. The side-by-side seats in the two-person planes were used for pilot training until 2000, Edelson, said.

"After that they all became available to the Snowbirds. They require attention and care but they are excellent for aerobatics since they are very stable and do well in wind and turbulence. They're underpowered but that's good for staying in front of an audience," Edelson said.

Despite the sound spectators hear, Edelson said the ride is relatively quiet inside the plane. They are flying ahead of the sound and their helmets are so well insulated they also block sound.

Other planes

Although the Snowbirds stole the show other pilots put on an excellent performance many with World War II planes, including the Heritage Flight with an A-10 Thunderbolt and P151



The formation of nine planes flew across the Waukegan sky a number of times

Mustang. Other flights included the Aerostars, F4U Corsairs, an F-86 Sabre, C-47 Skytrain as well as a wing-walker and parachutists.

The Waukegan Regional Airport has been named the Number One Regional Airport in Illinois for 2012.