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SATURDAY NIGHT FALCON FEVER

Saturday Night Fever put disco into the spotlight as John Travolta gyrated across a multi-coloured dancefloor. Fast forward 30 years and **Joris van Boven** joined fellow photographers to shoot another Saturday night star against the bright lights of Volkel Air Base's runway.

On Saturday, October 6 an ambitious event at Volkel Air Base in the Netherlands offered superb opportunities for 80 photographers. Organised by Spotting Group Volkel, with the support of the installation's commander, this was its most creative yet.

An operational F-16AM (MLU) Fighting Falcon, J-015, from 312 Sqn with inert/training AIM-9L Sidewinder air-to-air missiles on the wingtips and a drop tank on each wing was the star of the show. The sunset/night shoot started at 5pm when photographers were bussed out to the awaiting aircraft at the threshold of Runway 24R.



Main photo: SG Volkel tried something new for this photoshoot using the aircraft and runway to good effect. All photos Joris van Boven, unless stated.



Initially the Fighting Falcon was on the runway centreline for head-on shots – an aircraft tug then positioned it at different angles throughout the evening to create a variety of photographic opportunities.

A flatbed truck trailer provided a platform for photographers, who were also able to use a set of engineering steps for elevated perspectives.

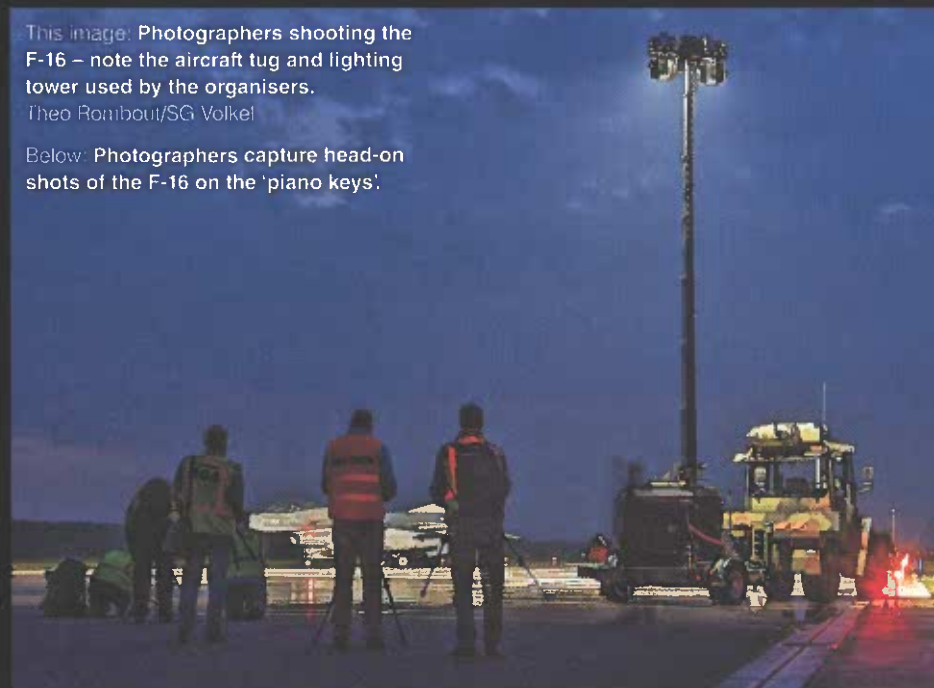
The F-16 was repositioned at an angle on the runway 'piano keys' and one of the military volunteers (a Fighting Falcon crew chief from 312 Sqn) donned a flying suit and helmet, climbed into the cockpit, closed the canopy and stayed in position for an hour, to create a more operational mood.

Just before sunset the aircraft was moved again in a bid to capture the last rays of the sun reflecting on the canopy, but clouds thwarted the attempt.

As dusk arrived, the aircraft's lights were switched on – aided by an external ground power unit – the runway lights came on and

This image: Photographers shooting the F-16 – note the aircraft tug and lighting tower used by the organisers. Theo Ronibout/SG Volkel

Below: Photographers capture head-on shots of the F-16 on the 'piano keys'.



a powerful lamp illuminated the aircraft offering photographers the chance to shoot stunning images.

The finale involved two of the base's fire department appliances drenching the runway with water – aiming to create a reflective surface, but the sloping grooved runway drained too quickly to achieve this.

The joint effort by five military volunteers and three members of SG Volkel led to a well-run event, which concluded at 8.30pm, and made for a Saturday night to remember.

CALLING ALL PHOTOSHOOT ORGANISERS

Are you organising an aviation-themed photoshoot? If so, we'd love to hear from you. From the next issue we plan to list such events, so please email the details to editor Dino Carrara at dino.carrara@keypublishing.com



CHARITIES

Each of the 80 photographers paid €10 to attend the photoshoot in aid of Dierenpark Zie-ZOO, which supports animal therapy for people with autism. The zoo is near the entrance to the base and SG Volkel has permission for photographers' vehicles to use its car park. The children's ward of the local Hospital Bernhoven also received a donation.



A stunning shot of 312 Sqn F-16AM (MLU) Fighting Falcon, J-015 on the threshold of Volkel AB's Runway 24R.

