



*Ukrainian MiG dazzles North Americans.*

## UKRAINIAN MiGs DRAW RECORD CROWDS

In 1992, with the support of the Ukrainian Flying Club (LUK), Ukraine sent a team to compete at the World Space Modelling Championships in Florida and placed overall 4th in the world. This was a historical moment, since this was the first Ukrainian national team to compete in a world championship under the banner, anthem and flag of Ukraine.

LUK has also now become involved with the former "Soviet" aero club of Ukraine to help turn it into a truly Ukrainian national club, and thus the Federation of Aero Sports (FAS) of Ukraine was formed. It is now the governing body for all aero and astro sports in Ukraine. Its greatest undertaking was the first Ukrainian Air Force MiG-29 Demonstration Team Tour of North America.

In February 1992 LUK organized two aircraft from the Ukrainian Air Force (VPS) to participate in a 20-city air show tour of North America. Two Ukrainian MiG-29's,

support equipment, including two spare engines and crew, headed by MGen Yaroslav Skalko, Deputy Commander of the Ukrainian Airforce, were loaded into an AN-124 "Ruslan" which took off from Stryi, western Ukraine bound for Edmonton, Alberta. On May 8, 13.5 hours later, and low on fuel, they landed at CFB Edmonton. In addition to the MiG's, the air show hosted the AN-225 Mriya, the world's biggest airplane made in Ukraine. It was in Canada to pick up medical and health care related supplies for Ukraine. This project was organized by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, and medical supplies were donated by Edmonton residents. The Mriya left fully loaded for Kyiv, while the team headed for Winnipeg. In Winnipeg, MGeneral Skalko was met at the airport by BGen I. Popowych, COS Air Command and BGen V. Pergat, both of Ukrainian origin.

The North American leg of the tour included the U.S. cities of Scranton (Penn.); Minot (N. D.); Rockford (Illinois); Mojave (Calif.); Goodlands (Kansas); Niagara Falls (N.Y.); Columbus (Ohio); Burlington (Virginia); Red Deer (Alberta); Abbotsford (BC); Windsor (Ont.);

Chatham, (NB); London (Ont.); and Trenton (Ont.) in Canada. These 17 airshows and over 10 fuel stops generated much good press coverage for the team and Ukraine, and drew large and record-breaking crowds! The team members were truly "Ukraine's ambassadors of good will".

Business opportunities were also a great part of the tour. Since airshows are the largest attraction for the public and corporate sponsors (after baseball or hockey!), it is no wonder that a large number of business requests were left with the team. These opportunities dealt not only with aviation or tourism, but some included manufacturing, metals, agriculture, sports, etc. In less than a year, a number of joint ventures were formed, directly because of the tour.

It is expected that the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence will see the benefit of such a team for the 1994 season. LUK is also interested in hearing from any corporations willing to co-sponsor the tour. For information, contact the *Ukraine-Canada Policy and Trade Centre*. ■