

# Thunderbirds visit Waterloo to prepare for upcoming show



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By JOHN MOLSEED, john.molseed@wfcourier.com | Posted: Wednesday, February 9, 2011 7:00 pm | (4) Comments

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Capt. Kristin Hubbard, a member of the Thunderbirds, gets out of a F-16 fighter jet for a visit at the Waterloo airport in Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2011, in Waterloo, Iowa. The event was to preview the world class show to be held Aug. 27-28. (MATTHEW PUTNEY / Courier Photo Editor)

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WATERLOO, Iowa - A preview of August was in the frigid air Wednesday as the advanced team for the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds arrived in Waterloo.

Capt. Kristin Hubbard, a member of the Thunderbirds, surveyed the landscape around the Waterloo airport in a F-16 fighter jet. She and Staff Sgt. Brian Emerson represented the Thunderbirds as the advance team preparing for the Kiwanis-backed Thunder in the Valley Air Show. More than a dozen people - including city, law enforcement and local military - turned out at the airport to watch Hubbard fly by. The pleasure wasn't all theirs.

"I don't want anyone to find out I have fun on the job," she joked after landing following a fly over at the airport. "I love showing off my airplane."

The jet shook the airport with a resonating roar as she passed over one of the runways twice Wednesday afternoon. Her flight was not just a noisy excursion but was an inspection. Hubbard noted the structures around the airport and planned possible performance lines for this summer.

"I hope I didn't make too much noise," she said to Waterloo Mayor Buck Clark after she landed.

Clark and other air show committee members hope her visit generates a little noise and some extra attention for the Aug. 26-28 air shows.

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Chris Harshbarger, a member of the air show planning committee, said the committee was persistent in bringing the elite squadron to the Cedar Valley. Harshbarger said the event could draw upward of 50,000 people and become an annual fixture.

"Everything from here on out will have to top what we plan to do," he said.

Hubbard said the Thunderbirds will be pleased to show to the Waterloo audience.

"Our job is to get out there and recruit the people who are going to replace us someday," she said. Interested in aviation as a child, Hubbard said she never dreamed of becoming a fighter pilot.

"I chose the most difficult thing and continued to push and push," she said.

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