

Carlos AND THE Texan

Carlos Edo has **AND THE** created probably the **THE** most successful 'warbird' aerobatic team ever seen in Latin American. Nigel Price charts its history and looks at its future



AT THE EDGE of the busy São Carlos airfield flightline, deep in Brazil's São Paulo State, a large crowd waited in anticipation as the roar of five Pratt & Whitney Wasp radials rose to a crescendo and the 'Esquadrilha Oi' warbird display team taxied out for the airshow's finale. The spectators were not to be disappointed, as the three North American Texans and single Beech 18 put on a fabulous show, with manoeuvres that belied the aircraft's vintage status.

First, the Texans executed formation aerobatics over the airfield, trailing smoke while demonstrating routines that are more associated with military display teams, flying much more powerful aircraft. The 'bomb-burst in the sky' section, where all three climb in close formation then split in different directions before the flight reforms, was particularly impressive.

With precision planning and timing, they cleared the airspace over the runway and the Beech came into play – dropping skydivers to entertain while the T-6s re-positioned. When the last of the three parachutists had safely landed, the twin-engined transporter went into its own routine – which included a barrel roll!

The 40-minute show ended with a series of four-ship 'fast passes', with the smoke generators working overtime. Following a smart run and break, the flight landed and soaked up the rapturous applause. (See *Fly-in Brazilian Style* in the June issue.)

LOVE AT FIRST FLIGHT

Although not widely known outside of the 'Americas', this busy team has been around in one form or



another for nearly three decades. The Campinas, São Paulo-based 'Esquadrilha Oi', is the brainchild of advertising executive, Carlos Edo.

In the early 1980s, Carlos was co-owner of one of Brazil's biggest agencies, Nucleo de Propaganda, and a keen 'weekend' pilot. At around this time, an acquaintance introduced him to the aerobatic world courtesy of a restored T-6 that originally belonged to the Brazilian Air Force. He fell instantly in love with the warbird! Two weeks later, Carlos acquired a very nice example from a private owner and started that what has been a passion for almost three decades.

He drew on his marketing skills and found a sponsor for a season

ABOVE: *The team's colourful Beech E-18S PT-DHI.*

TOP: *Team 'Esquadrilha Oi' at São Carlos. Rear, left to right: Laert Gouveia; Gustavo Albrecht; Mônica Edo; Carlos Edo and Marcelo Jorge. Front, left to right: Sebastian Edo; Rogerio Caggiano; Jose Guilherme Saez and João D'Angelo.*

of skywriting over São Paulo's beaches. This was in association with a former military pilot, Capt Portugal Motta, from the first Air Force Demonstration Team, known as 'Esquadrilha da Fumaça' ('Smoke Squadron').

Buoyed by his success Carlos acquired another aircraft, a Beech E-18, along with a skydiving team and a new, bigger sponsor, the Italian Cinzano drink company. This agreement lasted for three years and the team performed more than 100 demos, mainly in the interior of São Paulo State in southern Brazil.

IN DEMAND

During 1987, there was considerable demand for the display team, so



SNJ-5C PT-KRC in the baking heat of the São Carlos ramp on April 29.



*Gustavo Albrecht
and AT-6D
PT-LDO in tight
formation.*

*'Esquadrilha Oi'
on
a fast pass over
the crowd on April
29. MARCIO JUMPEI*



*Laert Gouvea
keeps AT-6B
PT-LDQ on the
Beech's wing-tip
during the display.*



(Onix Aerial Circus) was born, giving its first demonstration at the Worldwide Skydiving Championship at Foz de Iguacú city in Paraná State during September 1987. The team went on to give more than 400 performances all over the country for the incredibly long period of eleven years, with probably the longest sport

The T-6s trail smoke over São Carlos airfield while the skydivers get ready to jump.

Pilots

No.	Name	Flying hours	Displays
1	Carlos Edo	11,500	700
2	Laert Gouvea	10,000	400
3	Gustavo Albrecht	8,000	200
4	Marcelo Jorge	7,000	300
5	Hernani Dippolito	5,000	100
6	Yuri Albrecht	5,000	50
7	Mônica Edo	1,500	-



Carlos looked into expanding and developing the 'act', encompassing aerobatics, skydiving, ballooning and ground exhibitions. To give more of a corporate appearance, all the team members were to have the same uniforms, the aircraft repainted in identical schemes, and even the parachute canopies would match!

With the previous deal having expired, all that was needed was to find a sponsor with equally big ideas. Carlos offered the team's services to one of his agency's major clients, Onix Jeans from the Claudino Group, a very large company with more than 12,000 employees.

The proposal was immediately accepted, and the Circo Aéreo Onix

sponsorship deal ever in Brazil. The acts went down extremely well, and were seen by more than 10 million people, as well as attracting TV presence and considerable national media coverage.

The Cessna 170 support ship, still in its Onix Aerial Circus livery.

AS ONE DOOR CLOSSES...

Unfortunately, at the end of 1998, radical changes in the Brazilian commerce market, mainly caused by the high exchange rate for the US dollar, forced the company to re-focus its business. This led to a lower promotional budget and spelt the end of the Circo Aéreo Onix.

But Carlos still had the aircraft and the will to go on, so for three years the team kept flying with more casual, short-term, sponsorship agreements. This kept everyone motivated, maintaining a high profile in order to attract a new, permanent, backer.



The formation from the Beech's cockpit.



A smart run and break, complete with smoke.

Gustavo Albrecht gets ready for a display in AT-6D PT-LDO.

ALL KEY-NIGEL PRICE UNLESS NOTED



The determination paid off when a new cellular phone operator 'Oi' (which translates to 'Hi' in English) was formed towards the end of 2001 and wanted the team to help establish its brand. Contracts were signed in February 2002 and the airmen soon got to work – making 40 demonstrations in two T-6s that year.

These sorties featured the aircraft 'skywriting' and performing aerobatics over the beaches of Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and other northeast cities. The 'Esquadilha Oi' ('Hi Squadron') was in the air!

In 2003, the contract was renewed with three T-6s and in 2004, the Beech (having left the fleet in 2002) now rejoined along with the skydiving team. Another massive boost came when Shell Aviation announced that it would also support the outfit.

Since that time, 'Esquadilha Oi' has performed hundreds of times, thrilling the crowds across Brazil. And this looks set to continue, with agreements signed until December 2008.

THE FUTURE

In July 2008, Carlos is going to be 60, and is planning to hand over the leadership of the squadron to long-time wingman, Capt Laert Gouvea. By that time, he will have completed almost 800 demonstrations and more than 12,000 flying hours.

After stepping down, Carlos intends to join the ground support and public relations team, working alongside his wife, Monica (who also flies the T-6s and skydives). After that, he has ambitions to circumnavigate the world, taking "as long as it takes!"

FlyPast wishes to thank Mônica and Carlos Edo, all at the 'Esquadilha Oi', Ian Comber and TAM Airline for all their help in the making of this feature.

'Esquadilha Oi' aircraft

Type	Registration	Team No.
NA SNJ-5C	PT-KRC	#1
NA AT-6B	PT-LDO	#2
NA AT-6D	PT-LDO	#3
Beech E-18S	PT-DHI	#4
Cessna 170	PT-AGB	
Embraer 110	PT-EDO	
Bandeirante		

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