FLIGHT International, 7 lune 1973

This page, the ageless Spitfire and the full team of the Patrouille de France. At the top, opposite, the Mirage G.8 and Grumman F-I4A present their upper surfaces. Below, the Falcon 10 leads the
Falcon 10 and 30 and the Mercure in the Dassault
civil presentation

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HE LOSS of one of the world's most technically advanced and significant airliners brought the
1973 Salon to a sombre close. Paris has known tragedies before, as indeed have other major regular aviation showplaces, but never has there been a harsher reminder of the penalty of demonstrating the current ultimate in performance in public.
The accident concluded ten days during which the demonstration pilots had had to contend with extremes of weather and had done so with the professional ability which one associates with them. To start with there had been thunderstorms, sweeping at intervals across northern Paris, but these abated having, as it were, washed the sky, and for three days the experts could make use of the full canvas. Five days of rain with no relief then turned Le Bourget into a quagmire and only the most hardy ventured

The Tu-144 crashed while taking part in the Paris
Show on Sunday, June 3, killing the six crew members
and eight people on the ground. The accident hap-
pened after the aircraft had made a steep climbing
turn to approximately 1,500ft. During the subsequent descent, the Tu-144 disintegrated, the first failure appearing to take place outboard of the starboard engines. The ruptured fuel lines ignited and an explosion completed the destruction of the starboard wing and separation of the engines.

to the gardens of the chalets to watch flying that was marked more by dogged determination than by artistry. At its worst the visibility reduced to barely a kilometre, but for the days when it mattered most—the spectacular pageants of the last Saturday and Sunday—a breeze kept the visibility sharp and the cloudbase was high enough to affect only the most expansive loops.
The flying during the working days of the Salon is purposeful, directed at selling the product in its best light in front of a small but influential audience. Occasion-ally a rehearsal gives a hint of the spectacle to come, perhaps one arrives as the dust covers are being removed from the indoor exhibits to find the sky criss-crossed with red and blue smoke trails where the Red Arrows have, without ostentation, been putting yet more gloss on their near-perfect display. The Spitfire flies during a lunchbreak and for a moment the knives and forks are silenced as a new generation stands in awe and older men reminisce. Finally Saturday arrives, and with it the crowds. The late participants have taken their places—and some static exhibits with no further part to play have stolen away. For seven and a half hours the stage will be occupied. At first sight the 1973 programme hinted at a quiet morning with the best of the action reserved for the after-noon, but there was no disparity in the quality of the flying and some of the least likely participants were presented in memorable performances. Perhaps only pilots themselves appreciate the nuances of a display such as that of the two Zlins. Czechoslovakia has been in the forefront of world