

# **SPORT Acrobatics**

JANUARY 2010

INTERNATIONAL AEROBATIC CLUB

## **R.A.“Bob” Hoover**

IAC's 2009 Hall of Fame Inductee

- The IAC turns 40
- The Doug Yost Scholarship

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IAC Hall of Famer R. A. "Bob" Hoover at the controls of his Shrike Commander.

– Photo: EAA Photo Archives

# SPORT Aerobatics

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## LETTER from the EDITOR

by Reggie Paulk

## Our Club Turns 40

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the International Aerobic Club. That's quite a feat, but what's even more amazing is that 115 of our current members have been with us the entire time. In the months ahead, we'll bring you some of their stories. In addition, we're going to run articles from the old days to show you just how far we've come as an organization and a sport.

The January issue is the Hall of Fame issue. For 2009, the recipient is none other than Bob Hoover. Vicki Cruse set up an opportunity for me to spend time with Mr. Hoover at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh last summer, and it is a memory I'll cherish for life.

I got to travel across the grounds of AirVenture with Mr. Hoover, and while we were driving, the Airbus A380 departed for its return to France. As it cleared the trees in front of us, Bob became quite animated as he described in detail how the airplane's flight control systems work.

Please submit news, comments, articles, or suggestions to: [reggie.paulk@gmail.com](mailto:reggie.paulk@gmail.com)

He'd had an opportunity to discuss the nuances of the airplane with the chief flight test pilot, and it showed. His recollection of minute details of airplanes he flew 60 years ago or yesterday is astounding. Congratulations, Mr. Hoover.

Looking forward to the year ahead, we are planning some exciting new additions to the content you have access to. The EAA has been placing a lot of content online, and the IAC is about to join the bandwagon. If you'd like to have a part in shaping the future of the online space, please don't hesitate to send your thoughts and suggestions to the board or me.

Some of you have reached out to me through e-mail. Sometimes I receive so many e-mails during the course of an issue that some get lost in the shuffle. I like to respond to every e-mail, so if you don't hear back from me in a reasonable time, please don't hesitate to re-send your message.

I look forward to 2010, and thank you for being here! ☺

## PRESIDENT'S PAGE

by Doug Bartlett • dbartlett@eaa.org



Douglas S. McConnell

**O**ne of the most enjoyable events each year is the EAA Hall of Fame dinner—which takes place during the fall board meetings in Oshkosh. Although Oshkosh is not the easiest place to get to in October, this one event makes the whole trip worthwhile. Imagine a fancy dinner with hundreds of fellow pilots and volunteers, held in a museum hangar where you are surrounded by authentic warbirds. Not only are you sitting next to your International Aerobatic Club (IAC) friends, but at the next table is none other than IAC Hall of Fame inductee Bob Hoover.

The stories you hear at this event are amazing. For example, Bob Hoover tells the story of how he escaped a German prisoner of war camp, stole a German aircraft, and flew to friendly lines. At the next table Jeff Skiles, the copilot of US Airways Flight 1549, which landed in the Hudson River, talks about his new role as co-chairman of the Young Eagles program. He shares his enthusiasm and entertaining stories with the many people who stop by his table to say hello. This one evening provides scores of stories worth repeating.

If you are ever near Oshkosh during the fall board meetings, take the time to attend this event. It is open to IAC members, and, for certain, you will have a wonderful evening talking with people from around the world.

Before I move on with an update on our membership committee, I would like to take time to say a few words on safety. As aerobatic enthusiasts, many of us put our aircraft through maneuvers that are way more aggressive on the airframe and powerplant than normal flight. Often, during the winter months, we take advantage of the downtime and get our annual inspections “out of

the way.” I would like to encourage each of us take the necessary time to ensure that our annual inspections are done with a good measure of detail and not pushed through in short order. Ensure that your mechanic understands the flight envelope of your aircraft, and that he or she is looking for signs of potential failure. Spend the time necessary to inspect your aircraft with the mechanic and talk about the types of problems your model has experienced over the past several years. Your mechanic should have experience with aerobatic aircraft. My mechanic spent the summer of 2008 working the air show circuit and is very familiar with the stresses placed on these planes. Brian will often tell me, “If it were a Cessna 182, I wouldn’t be concerned. But you need reliability and confidence in your ride, so we are going to fix it now.” Please remember that your aircraft is not being flown in the normal flight envelope, so your inspections need to be adjusted beyond that of a normal annual inspection.

Now an update. Our membership committee chairman, Doug McConnell, has been busy. Doug and his team have already started planning an e-newsletter for the IAC. The e-newsletter is being designed as an addition to our monthly magazine and not as a replacement. The IAC is working together with the other special interest groups within the EAA to learn the most effective ways to use Internet technology to enhance membership dialogue. Along with this, the committee is examining new methods to stay in touch with our members on a more regular basis.

The EAA has been very helpful with our e-newsletter, and Chairman McConnell hopes to launch it by the end of the first quarter. He has asked for member and chapter input as to the type of information this new forum may provide and how it can be effectively used for the benefit of our members and chapters. Also, we are looking for a catchy name! Please forward ideas to Doug McConnell at [doug\\_mcconnell@comcast.net](mailto:doug_mcconnell@comcast.net).

Speaking of e-mail, I have been surprised in the first few months as president of the IAC by how few e-mails have been sent. In an earlier article, members were encouraged to stay in contact with their regional directors and the presidents of their chapters. Let me add to this. I would like to hear directly your thoughts about our IAC. As president, it is important to know what the membership is thinking and how the club can best provide for all. Some members think of us as just a U.S. organization. This is not correct. We are

the largest aerobatic club and have members throughout the world. I would appreciate the opportunity to hear from as many as possible.

I hope to be able to visit many chapters this coming year and attend, as a competitor and as a volunteer, many more of the regional contests. Also, I would enjoy opportunities to visit as many chapter meetings as possible.

Before I sign off, let me remind you that 2010 marks the 40th year for the IAC. It is amazing that 115 of our current members were active that first year. What an organization. Enjoy the new year and fly safely. Congratulations to all on our 40th anniversary! 

*The stories  
you hear at  
this event  
are amazing.*

# NEWSBRIEFS



Gray Brandt (photographer) and Jenner Knight (chase plane pilot).

U.S. Advanced Team Captain Reinaldo Beyer over his Chapter 36 home box in Borrego Springs, California.

## 2010 U.S. Advanced Team Update

The 2010 U.S. Advanced Aerobatic Team has been chosen and is preparing to compete in world competition in Radom, Poland in August 2010.

You may learn more and give your support at [www.advancedaerobaticteam.com](http://www.advancedaerobaticteam.com)

## Gone West: William C. "Buck" Weaver

Buck Weaver of Enterprise, Alabama died on Saturday, December 12th, 2009. Buck was IAC #767, joining the Club in its first year of existence (1970) and a member ever since. A retired US Army Lieutenant Colonel who served in World War II, Korea, and Viet Nam, Buck was attracted to aerobatics through EAA and attended his first local aerobatic contest shortly after joining. He really became hooked, however, when he attended IAC's Championships in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin in 1973 where he first met Bob Heuer, then President of IAC. Bob told him, "It's all about the people, Buck." This was something he remembered forever and he frequently brought this up in conversations. Buck made life-long friends in our organization and he treasured his membership and involvement. He attended Fond du Lac every year and the US Nationals for many years.

Though he owned a Pitts S-1 at one time, Buck's talents and skills brought him to the judging arena and this is where he excelled. There have been few volunteers in IAC's ranks who have devoted more years, days, and hours on the judging line than he did over the 40 years he was a member of IAC. In the late 1970's, he took over what was then known as the IAC's Judges Education Program and wrote the annual recurrency examination as well as the home study course for IAC judges. He was also a member of the IAC Rules Committee and he reveled in the opportunity to discuss the fine points of the rules. Though he was not active in judging in recent years, he was often on the phone, talking to friends about the latest developments, news in the magazine, and various rules proposals. He loved the details of our sport. He was also a frequent contributor to *Sport Aerobatics* magazine.

He received numerous IAC awards including the Robert L. Heuer Award for Judging Excellence in 1992. Duane Cole chose him for the Rolly Cole Trophy in the 1970's. These were well deserved in addition to the dozens of trophies and awards he received for service on the judging line.

Buck's service in World War II was particularly noteworthy as he was a Glider pilot in Europe and North Africa. During his service in the US Army, he also qualified in helicopters and finished his military career at Ft. Rucker, Alabama.

**CORRECTION:** Page 21 of the December issue lists Bill Denton as Bill Denon.



Drive one.

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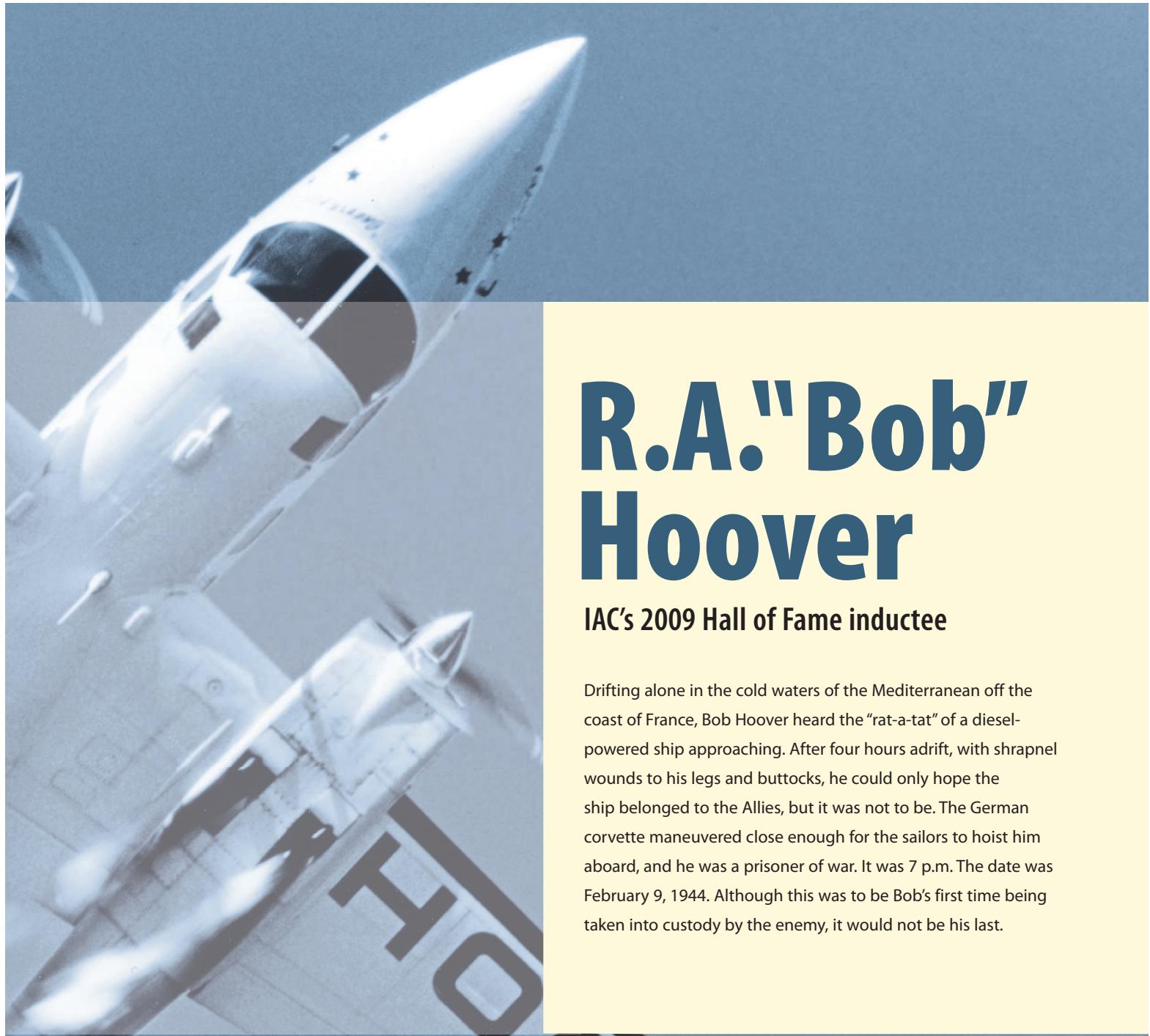
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Jim Koepnick



# R.A."Bob" Hoover

IAC's 2009 Hall of Fame inductee

Drifting alone in the cold waters of the Mediterranean off the coast of France, Bob Hoover heard the "rat-a-tat" of a diesel-powered ship approaching. After four hours adrift, with shrapnel wounds to his legs and buttocks, he could only hope the ship belonged to the Allies, but it was not to be. The German corvette maneuvered close enough for the sailors to hoist him aboard, and he was a prisoner of war. It was 7 p.m. The date was February 9, 1944. Although this was to be Bob's first time being taken into custody by the enemy, it would not be his last.

**T**he youngest of three children, Bob was born in Nashville, Tennessee, on January 24, 1922. With a love for anything mechanical, he purchased an old Ford Model T chassis for \$7 when he was 13 years old. He got his first taste of flying when he took the vehicle to a local golf course and found that he "could get airborne if I hit some of the bumps just right." Of course, the fun stopped when his parents found out.

Charles Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic provided the spark that ignited Bob's lifelong passion for aviation. He spent many hours daydreaming he was at the controls of the aircraft, alone over the Atlantic Ocean. (F.F. pg. 14)

Growing up, Bob built models of World War I airplanes such as the Nieuport and Spad. These airplanes allowed him to fly in his mind and fueled his desire to fly for real.

In high school, he read anything having to do with aviation, even memorizing the handbook for the Alexander Eaglerock. But it was a book by Bernie Ley that introduced him to aerobatics. "I studied the maneuvers until I knew every one by heart." (F.F. pg. 15)

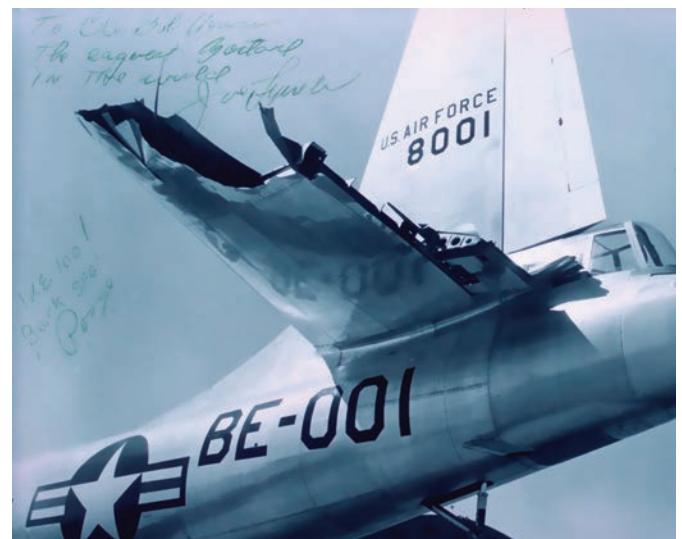
At 15 years old, Bob worked 16-hour days for \$2 a day sacking groceries. He used this money to pay for flying lessons at Berry Field, making the 30-mile round trip on his bicycle. At \$8 per hour for flight

training, Bob had to work 64 hours at the grocery store for every hour of flight. According to Bob, "It was worth every penny." (F.F. pg. 16) After a year of working at the grocery store, he had finally flown the requisite eight hours for solo. It wasn't long after this flight he began putting the little Piper Cub through its paces flying loops and spins. Soon after this, Bob flew his first "air show" to show his family his flying skill.

"I decided to impress them by flying between two trees," he recalled in his book. "Unfortunately, I had not anticipated a sudden updraft, and it lifted the airplane just enough to catch a wingtip on one of the branches. The plane jerked abruptly,



ABOVE: Hoover with his yellow P-51 Mustang wearing his business best. UPPER RIGHT: With Chuck Yeager. LOWER RIGHT: This photo of a damaged B-45 Tornado from 1950 is inscribed: "To Ole Bob Hoover, The eagerest Bastard in the world - Joe Lynch."



A few of the  
aircraft  
Bob Hoover  
has flown  
>>>



CURTISS PUSHER REPLICA



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MARTIN  
B-26 MARAUDER

but I quickly got it under control and made it out of there and back to a safe landing." (F.F. pg. 17)

It may not seem possible, but Bob Hoover suffered from chronic motion sickness while taking his flying lessons. He resolved to overcome it so he could become a fighter pilot.

Soon after graduating from high school in 1940, Bob joined the Tennessee Air National Guard as a tail-gunner trainee on the Douglas O-38. When Bob first joined, it wasn't possible for enlisted men to go to pilot training. It didn't take long for that to change. When the opportunity came, Bob took and passed the written test. A little help from the flight surgeon on the eye test sealed the deal—shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he reported to Helena, Arkansas, for primary flight training in the Boeing PT-17.

His flying skills were evident early on. On graduation day, Bob was asked by the commanding officer to put on a demonstration. His performance so impressed his instructor, Capt. Bart Renno, he wrote Bob a letter 34 years later that read in part, "Your performance in that thirty minutes was the epitome of Air Corps flying and, I am certain, will never be equaled or surpassed." (F.F. pg. 23)

After advanced training, Bob was sent to Drew Field in Tampa, Florida, as part of the 20th Fighter Group. There, he would fly both the P-40 and the P-39 "widow maker."

With a reputation for getting into tumbles during dogfights, the P-39 had a bad reputation among pilots. Bob fell in love with it. Of course, he had to discover whether the rumors were true, so he took the airplane to altitude and got it to tumble. It took deployment of the gear and flaps to bring it back into a normal spin, but Bob was able to replicate the maneuver. It wasn't until later the maneuver was named the lomcevak, which is Czech for headache.



In Illinois, July of 1969 with his twin-engine Shrike Commander..

Besides flying, Bob's true love is dogfighting. When he first arrived in Europe, he was used as a flight-test pilot putting newly assembled planes through their paces before being used in combat. Although he loved this duty, his heart yearned for the thrill of the fight. He finally got that chance when he was stationed in Palermo, Italy, flying the Spitfire Mark V.

On the fateful day of February 9, 1944, Bob was on a search and destroy patrol tasked with attacking enemy

ships and trains on the French/Italian border. After destroying a German freighter, his four-ship formation returned to base to refuel. When they returned to the patrol, they found a German convoy near Nice, France, and were able to score a few direct hits while divebombing the ships.

For these missions, the Spits were equipped with both bombs and external fuel tanks, which made the airplanes cumbersome for dogfighting. If enemy fighters were

*With a reputation for getting into tumbles during dogfights, the P-39 had a bad reputation among pilots. Bob fell in love with it.*



BREDA 15S



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P-51A



Taking a VW ride past a crowd of admirers at the EAA Oshkosh fly-in in 1977.

*Bob went to work as a test pilot at Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio, flying just about every high-performance aircraft the war had produced.*



Receiving the Dick Schram Trophy at a chapter banquet in Chicago, Illinois.

encountered, the stores could be jettisoned to improve performance.

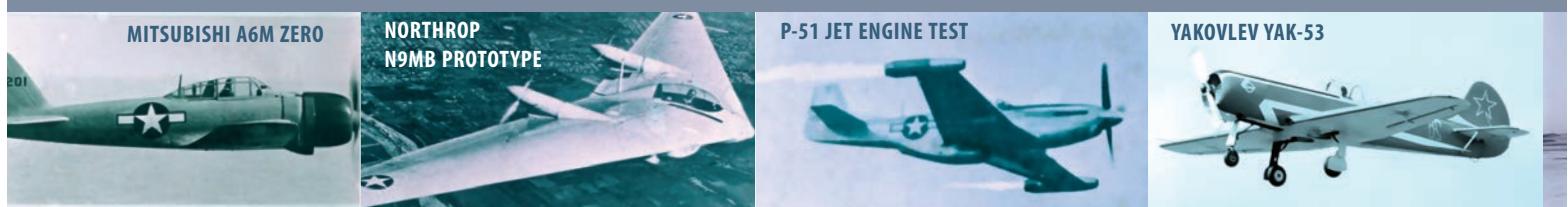
After their bombing run, Bob noticed four German Focke-Wulf 190s bearing down on one of his flight's tail. He yelled over the radio to warn the other pilot and simultaneously reached down and pulled the release handle to let go of his external fuel tank.

Breaking loose in his hand, the release malfunctioned, leaving him with limited maneuverability. He headed for one of the German fighters and pulled the trigger. Smoke poured from the airplane, marking his first kill. Soon, two enemy fighters came after him, but Bob thought the other two aircraft in his flight would help out.

Watching his remaining flight peel away for safety, Bob cursed the pilots with all his might as the two German fighters closed in for the kill. His fuel-laden aircraft was slower than they anticipated, causing the aircraft to overshoot. They turned back, unable to out turn his slower aircraft. Bob took the opportunity to shoot at one of them, but right as he thought he might make a hit, his own airplane got hit from below. Searing pain shot through his lower extremities as shrapnel ripped into his legs and buttocks. At the same time, another FW-190 came from behind and underneath his airplane, appearing in his sights. Bob fired off a burst from his guns just as his own engine exploded.

With the nose of his airplane engulfed in flames and oil covering the windshield, Bob knew his Spitfire was doomed. He rolled inverted and bailed out. After spending four hours in the cold Mediterranean, the German corvette hauled him out of the water.

Soon after arriving ashore in France, Bob was thrown into a local jail. He quickly discovered the bars in the window were quite loose and was able to remove them.



Dropping 10 feet to the ground, he made a run for freedom before being attacked by vicious German guard dogs. Now, he had dog bites to go with the untreated shrapnel wounds on his legs.

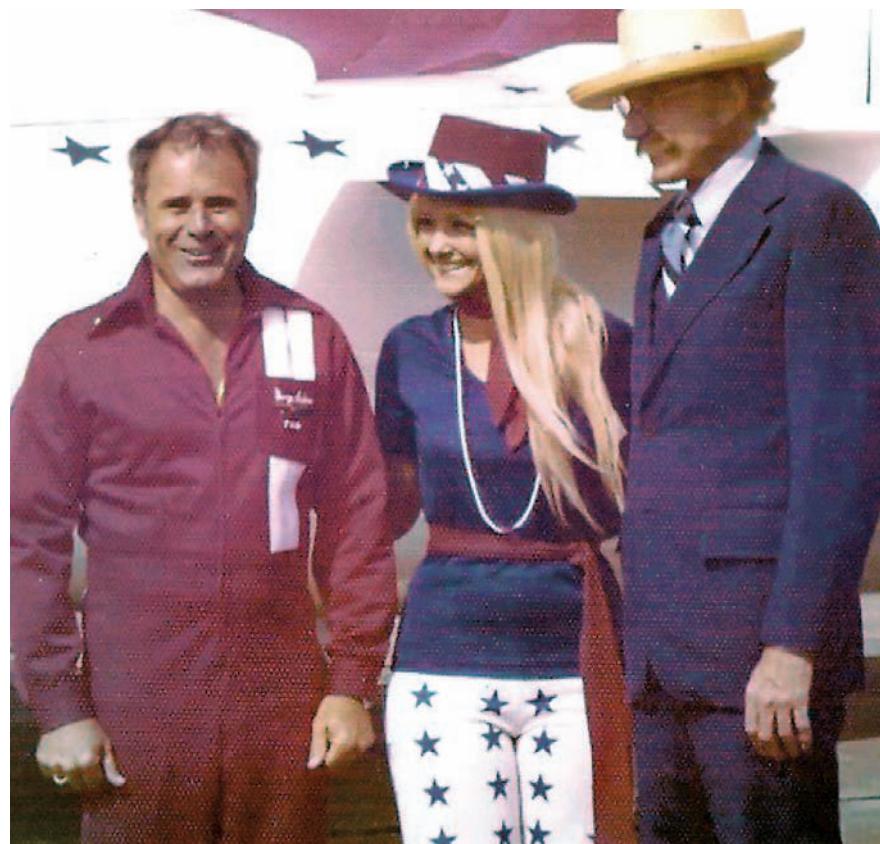
After being recaptured, the Germans put Bob on a train headed to Germany. While on the train with two sullen guards, Bob asked to use the restroom. While in the tiny room, he busted out the small window and jumped out, immediately becoming buried in deep snow. His attempt was quickly thwarted as he heard gunshots ring out.

After being recaptured, he was taken to an interrogation camp near Frankfurt. Here, Bob, with his as yet untreated wounds, was subjected to terrifying interrogations where his life was constantly threatened. At one point, he was led outside and faced a firing squad through the first two sequences of "ready, aim." It was here where he tried his third attempt at escape. Again he was thwarted, and this time it was off to the Stalag Luft I prison camp.

Before being shipped off to the Stalag prison camp, Bob and his fellow POWs were packed into boxcars the night before the trip. During the night, Allied bombers raided Frankfurt, and a boxcar full of prisoners four cars away was hit by friendly fire, killing all inside.

After 16 months and one more thwarted attempt at escape, Bob finally succeeded. With two companions, he was able to get away from the camp and his captors. He couldn't have imagined the horrors that awaited him as he encountered the invading Russians, but he was eventually able to work past them to a partially abandoned German airfield.

With the help of one of his companions and a .25 pistol given to him by a French conscript, Bob was able to commandeer a FW-190 while holding a German ground crew member at gunpoint. Staying



With fellow aerobat and Warbirds of America Hall of Famer, George Baker.

low to avoid detection, he landed in a field in Holland. The locals thought he might be a German defector, but the British believed he was who he said he was. Bob Hoover was finally a free man again.

Upon his return to the States, Bob went to work as a test pilot at Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio, flying just about every high-performance aircraft the war had produced. It was during this time that he met Chuck Yeager, during a dogfight no less. It was also during this time that he volunteered to test fly the Bell X-1 rocket plane. Little did he know that a couple of low passes for a friend would change history.

Bob was the number one pick for the X-1 program until he flew a couple of low passes over a fellow pilot's

## R. A. "Bob" Hoover: OTHER AWARDS

- Distinguished Flying Cross
- Soldier's Medal for Valor
- Air Medal with Clusters
- Purple Heart
- Croix de guerre

family while a CAA (predecessor of the FAA) inspector was watching. Unfortunately for him, he was flying the only jet in the entire country that day. He was still on the program, but Chuck Yeager was chosen for the primary spot.



"There are few opportunities to be the first to do anything, and I had missed out," he recalled. (F.F. pg. 110)

Bob never got a chance to fly the X-1. The engine of an F-84F fighter he was flying caught fire, and he was forced to eject because the fire had destroyed the flight control linkages. His seat failed to fire, and he was sucked out of

the airplane, striking his legs on the tail, shattering them. Six weeks later, he was cleared for flight duty, but he had already been replaced by another pilot on the X-1.

Bob Hoover's accomplishments are far too numerous to mention in the span of a magazine feature, but his career has spanned almost seven decades of aircraft development.

His contribution to aviation has been a contribution to our country and our way of life. Probably one of Bob's most high-profile deeds came about at the conclusion of the 1966 International Aerobatic Competition held in Moscow at the height of the Cold War. This comes directly from the prologue of his book *Forever Flying*:

*Strapped securely in the cockpit of the super-sleek Yak-18, I glanced out at the Soviet Dignitaries standing on the ramp. They were celebrating their overwhelming victory over the United States in the 1966 International Aerobatic Competition. "I've got a surprise for you, Ivan," I thought as I checked out the instrument panel in the unique Soviet plane.*

*Despite my years of experience as an accomplished aerobatic pilot, I'd never participated in a formal aerobatic competition. That had made it even more of an honor to be named the non-flying captain of our team.*

*Unfortunately, I'd experienced ten days of frustration watching the power-packed Yak out duel our nation's finest aerobatic pilots. We'd come out the big loser in the Cold War propaganda battle. Now that the competition was over, the pompous Soviets had agreed to let me, as a courtesy, fly their crown jewel.*

*Over a million Soviets, and reporters from around the world, were positioned at Tushino Airport in Moscow for the closing ceremonies. I was sure they all expected me to taxi out and take off in a normal fashion. Instead I added full power for takeoff and held the plane close to the ground.*

*The Yak had plenty of airspeed. I lifted the plane off and raised the nose slightly until the landing gear was up.*

*Rolling the aerobatic plane, I leveled off upside down and aimed dead center for the thirty-foot high dike surrounding the airport. It looked as if I were going to blast right through it, but an instant before reaching the dike, I raised the nose of the Yak, leapfrogged the dike, and flew out of sight still upside down.*

*A smile came to my face. I knew I'd caused confusion on the ground.*



As safety pilot, Hoover saved many pilots at the Reno Air Races with his cool advice.



RIGHT: Hoover's F-86 Sabre Jet.

BELOW: Hoover's Shrike Commander during his routine (note feathered props).



To stay low and out of sight of the crowd, I rolled the Yak right side up and headed back around the airfield alongside the Moscow River below the height of the dike. I was sure everyone would be looking for a fifty-foot-high fireball to blossom somewhere on the other side of the dike from where I had disappeared from sight.

I remained at ground level out of sight until I reached the other side of the airport. Then I turned back toward the dike and rolled the plane upside down again. I could feel the adrenaline rush as I flew down directly in front of the crowd. Then I put the Yak-18 through the same series of pinpoint aerobatic maneuvers that had been demonstrated for so many years at air shows all over the world. It was a delight to fly. No wonder our pilots never had a chance.

I was performing at near ground level even though I was aware that Soviet pilots were not permitted to fly aerobatic maneuvers below three hundred feet. After a touchdown on one wheel, an aileron roll, and a touchdown on the other wheel, I landed the Yak. I was a little nervous



about the reception I'd receive from the Soviets, but I'd proven my point. Now everyone would know that the American pilots were just as capable as the Russians and that the plane had made the difference in the competition.

The Soviets immediately took Bob into custody after wresting him

from a screaming, adoring mob of Russians. This time, he was released without harm. Bob Hoover is a living legend, and it's an honor to welcome him into the IAC Hall of Fame. ☺

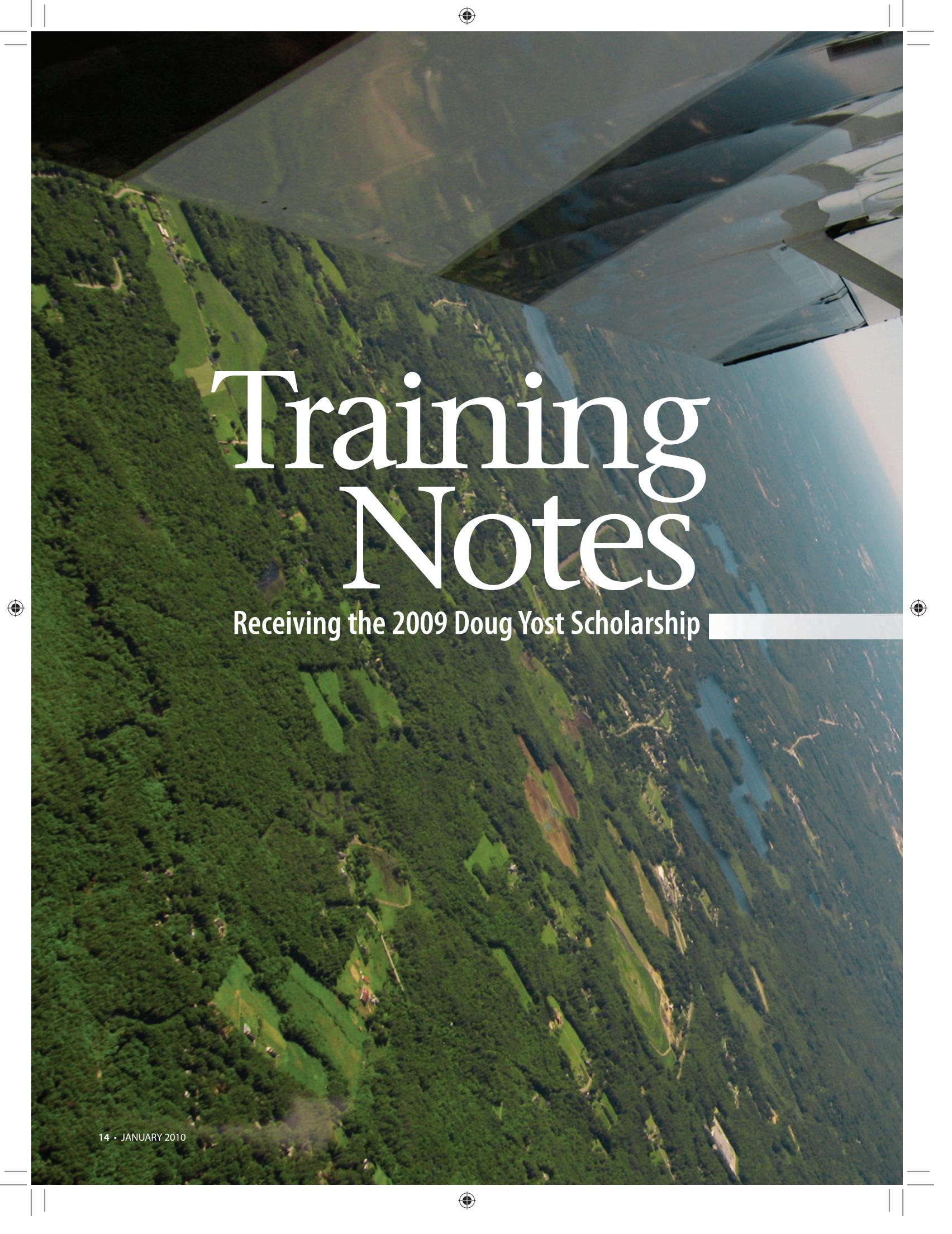
**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The details for this story were taken from Bob Hoover's autobiography, *Forever Flying*.

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# Training Notes

Receiving the 2009 Doug Yost Scholarship



*Story by, and photos courtesy of,  
Lise Lemeland*

**C**all me a masochist, but I actually enjoy applying for scholarships and grants. I'm a college professor, so it's almost a way of life. It's also a time-consuming process. But, the moment I send off the application, there is a rush of anticipation and hopefulness—I'm overcome with the fantasy of winning. . .



**In Lawrence, Massachusetts (Executive Flyers) using the scholarship funds.  
Strapped in my chute and ready to go!**



The Super Decathlon receives a waxing between my lessons in the Lawrence, MA hangar (Executive Flyers Aviation).

Visions of abundant hours in sparkling new airplanes, accelerated skill development, and expert instruction dance in my head. The seemingly endless days of waiting allow me to cultivate and relish my dreams. And then, once the decision is made, the brutal reality of just where I stand hits home.

As an artist, I have been on both sides of the grant and scholarship process. I've been both an applicant and a reviewer. It takes time to assemble a grant application, but I also know how grueling the judging process can be, and how a winner can emerge by no more than a vote or two. That's why I didn't get my hopes up (well, not too much) when I saw the e-mail from Mike Niccum, the president of IAC Chapter 78.

The e-mail subject was "Doug Yost Scholarship." Great expectations and hope went into my application for the Doug Yost Memorial Aerobatic Scholarship, but I was prepared for the worst. This time, to my surprise, I read the words every applicant hopes for: "Congrats!" followed by instructions to find an aerobatic school to

which the scholarship money could be sent. I was elated!

After embarrassing my 11-year-old son with my exuberance (NOT so cool, Mom) and dancing around the kitchen with my younger children, I sat down to think about what it all meant. I fly out of Hornell, New York (4G6), a wonderful airport that I fondly call my second home. Regrettably, however, it is located in an aerobatically deprived region. After a bit of research, I decided the best choice for me was Executive Flyers Aviation in Bedford/Lawrence, Massachusetts. My new airport was 283 nautical miles away, according to AirNav.com.

The Doug Yost scholarship is named for Doug Yost, an aspiring young career pilot who was a captain for a large corporation and a

sport aviation pilot. Doug held an FAA letter recognizing his airline transport pilot (ATP) qualification at age 18, even though his ATP certificate could not be granted until he turned 23. He was a rising star in the world of aerobatic competition who tragically lost his life in a motorcycle accident.

The scholarship is awarded annually from an endowment established in memory of Doug Yost by his family in 2002. The scholarship fund also has continuing sponsorship from Link Snacks Inc., maker of Jack Link's Beef Jerky. An irony characterizes many scholarships; one cherished life lost becomes the inspiration to establish the funding, and eventually give life to others' dreams. The purpose of this merit scholarship is to promote air safety through aerobatic training. It is administered by Chapter 78 of the IAC.

Unlike Doug, I am a latecomer to aviation. In my article "Akro Artist" (*Sport Aerobatics*, December 2009) I paint the story of an artist by profession who falls in love with flying at the tender age of...well never mind. My introduction to aviation began with a spur-of-the-moment biplane ride over Martha's Vineyard Island two summers ago...and ended up with me flying in my first aerobatic competition two summers later. What transpired in between was a lot of hard work, a fair financial investment (i.e., cash), and a *lot* of dreaming.

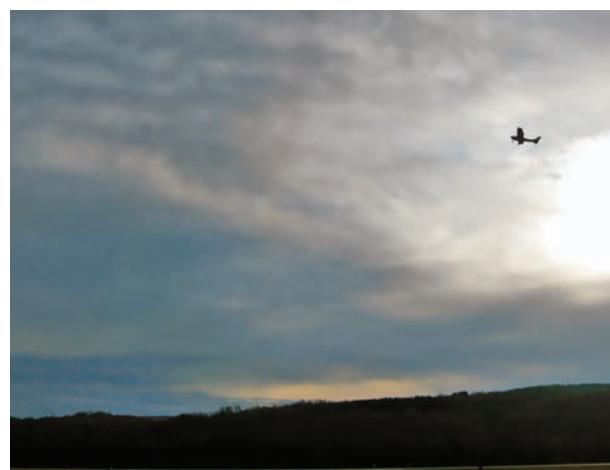
Every pilot has certain milestones they will always recall vividly. For me, my first flight in a Waco UPF-7 is one, and the second is my introductory flight in a Cessna 152 in Hornell, New York. The wind, though not terribly strong, bumped us around a bit. With my instructor Pat's expert coaching I learned how to maneuver the airplane, and even landed it. To call that day a milestone is an understatement. It was not only the day I started flying, it was also the day I met my husband-to-be...my certified flight instructor (CFI)!

From there, my training probably looks similar to many student pilots'. After much practice, I finally soloed, a thrilling and empowering event for every student of flight. Next was my solo cross-country, and then...unusual attitude training? Wait...isn't that a little bit out of order?

*Every pilot has certain milestones they will always recall vividly.*



**The day I first soloed (Sterling Airways, Hornell, New York, January 2009) with Pat, my CFI and husband.**



**The Cessna 152 (owned by Sterling Airways) over Hornell Airport. My son Santi is flying with my husband, Pat.**

What I didn't say about the Waco ride was that the pilot did some unrequested and impromptu aerobatics. And, I *loved* it! The few loops and barrel rolls performed over the ocean gave me a taste for aerobatics that didn't disappear over time; it only intensified. So much so that just after I did my first cross-country solo, I looked around for a flight school where I could do upset training and aerobatics. This is when I found Executive Flyers Aviation in Bedford, Massachusetts.

I called the school and spoke to Marc Nathanson (who would later be my instructor), and asked if he would do unusual attitude training with me. The EFA website strongly encourages pilots to get their private pilot certificate before enrolling in the course, but after a little discussion, Marc recognized my enthusiasm. We scheduled three days and four unusual attitude lessons in a Super Decathlon.

The short version of the story is that I was immediately hooked. I



The happy day I got my license, Sterling Airways, Hornell, New York, with Pete Treichler, my FAA designated examiner.

*I returned home exhilarated and vowed  
that I would find a way to continue to fuel  
this aspiration.*

made sure that Marc gave me an intro to aerobatics, and despite my getting sick after doing a bunch of spins I was hungry for more. I returned home exhilarated and vowed that I would find a way to continue to fuel this aspiration.

In the meantime, I studied hard and aced my written test. I accomplished my long cross-country, and like every student pilot, studied some

more. It was December, and I was flying as much as possible. I like to say that I flew the pants off that little 152, but actually, it was the steering rod boot that came off! This allowed the frigid winter air to circulate freely around the rudder pedals, and consequently we froze through stalls and engine-outs, cross-country trips, and short and soft landings. The checkride was only days away. Toastie Toes foot warmers became my new best friends. Weather got in the way of taking my checkride not once, not twice, but six times! Finally, I took it and passed in January 2009.

When I applied for the Doug Yost scholarship, I had only a handful of hours in the Super Decathlon. But, my desire to continue with aerobatics was larger than the state of Texas. After I got my certificate, I returned to Bedford a few times to do some loops and rolls, but I had run dry financially. I wrote—with great expectations and hopefulness—my essay for the Doug Yost scholarship:

As a person who does better with deadlines and goals in mind, I gave myself the goal of participating in a contest at the end of my scholarship-funded training. I liked the idea of perfecting my few figures and sizing myself up against other aerobatic pilots. Looking at the chapter contest schedule, I knew that the Kathy Jaffe Challenge would be my only shot at achieving this goal, since the semester started right afterward.

I registered for the contest through IAC, and six days prior to the competition, I drove eight hours to Bedford, Massachusetts. My destination was Executive Flyers Aviation, of which the president is none other than the jedi of aerobatics and air races, Michael Goulian. I've met Mike several times, and his superstar status in the aerobatic world has not affected his warm and encouraging demeanor. I reminded myself of his accomplishments as I hopped in the Super Decathlon for my aero warm-up. *Everybody starts somewhere.*

It was late afternoon. An hour into the lesson, the g's got to me. My stomach was very unhappy, and I was certain this was not going to work out. Upon landing, I turned an unattractive shade of green and got out of the airplane completely exhausted.



One of my first unusual attitudes lessons, doing a loop with Marc Nathanson in the back (my instructor).

Aerobatics is the stick and rudder type of flying  
I love, and yet the aerobatic pilot needs a rock-solid  
understanding of aerodynamics. Practice and study  
are the only ways to turn knowledge into second-nature, and  
for the aerobatic maneuver to transform into art in the sky.

I hope one day to fly aerobatic routines in competition, to  
compete nationally. I also hope to share the compelling  
and exciting sport of aerobatics with the world through my  
artwork and my teaching.

Shaking my head, I said to myself, *practice what you preach*. I promised Marc that I'd be at the open practice session early the next morning.

The chapter practice was the turning point. The IAC 35 guys were wonderful and very encouraging, each recounting his first competition stories and trials. And, I could tell that they were also amused at having an artist/aviatrix in their midst. The chapter president told me that I was the only woman he could recall ever flying aerobatics with Executive Flyers. Wow! I thought of my kids and hoped that they would be proud of their mother, especially my 7-year-old daughter.

I flew my sequence—all six figures in a row—for the first time ever, twice through. A judge on the radio named Guenther shouted in a thick German accent through my headset, "Pull! Pull! Now *pull harder!*" It was there I discovered that I needed two hands on the stick for the loop, and a calf-clenching amount of rudder on my roll out on the half-Cuban. And, through all this, I forgot about getting sick.

For the next three days I thought about nothing but aero. My instructor and I went over the aerial map of the aerobatic box at Kathy Jaffe, and we picked apart my sequence, per-



Chapter 35 practice. One of the pleasures of making new aerobatic friends was getting to sit in the Bucker Jungmeister owned by F. Paul Russo, Chapter 35 member.

*It was there I discovered that I needed two hands on the stick for the loop . . .*

forming sets of two and three figures at a time. We rehearsed spin exit-alignment and keeping the nose from sagging through the slow roll. After two days we had spent so much time on the 45-degree half-Cuban down-line that I developed what I called a negative-g headache. (Of course this is a totally unsubstantiated medical condition, but I can be pretty creative when I want to!) I was definitely having a blast. But I was also working hard, and beginning to exhibit symptoms of burnout.

Mother Nature gave me a weather break on the third day, and to be

honest, I needed it. The day off gave me time to let the information and training sink in, and a chance to catch my breath and remember why I was there. Despite my goal to compete, the real reason I got involved in aerobatics was—and still is—to have fun, challenge myself, and become a safer pilot. Flying a beautiful machine upside down, and being taught by a top aerobatic instructor is the icing on the cake, and also an experience most pilots aren't lucky enough to have.

This was definitely one of those milestones, recorded in my memory just as clearly as it was logged in my logbook. The artist in me was soaking up the experience like a sponge. And I felt, in the context of my own biography, that I was making history that aerobatic week.

The day of the competition arrived. As I drove down to Lumberton, New Jersey, to meet the decathlon, I had time to reflect on my good fortune. Two years earlier I had never been in a



**Aerobic lesson (Executive Flyers Super Decathlon).**

small airplane. Now, I was on my way to participate in an aerobatic contest.

I was ready to compete, especially given my abbreviated training time. I wanted the chance to test myself up there in the box, and above all, to enjoy it. Silently, I thanked the people who made this experience pos-

sible: my husband and CFI, my aerobatic instructor Marc, and of course, Doug Yost and the scholarship bearing his name. Doug was described as having a never-ending vigor for life, and I definitely share this attitude. *Self, I said, this is your chance. It's time to get upside down again!* 

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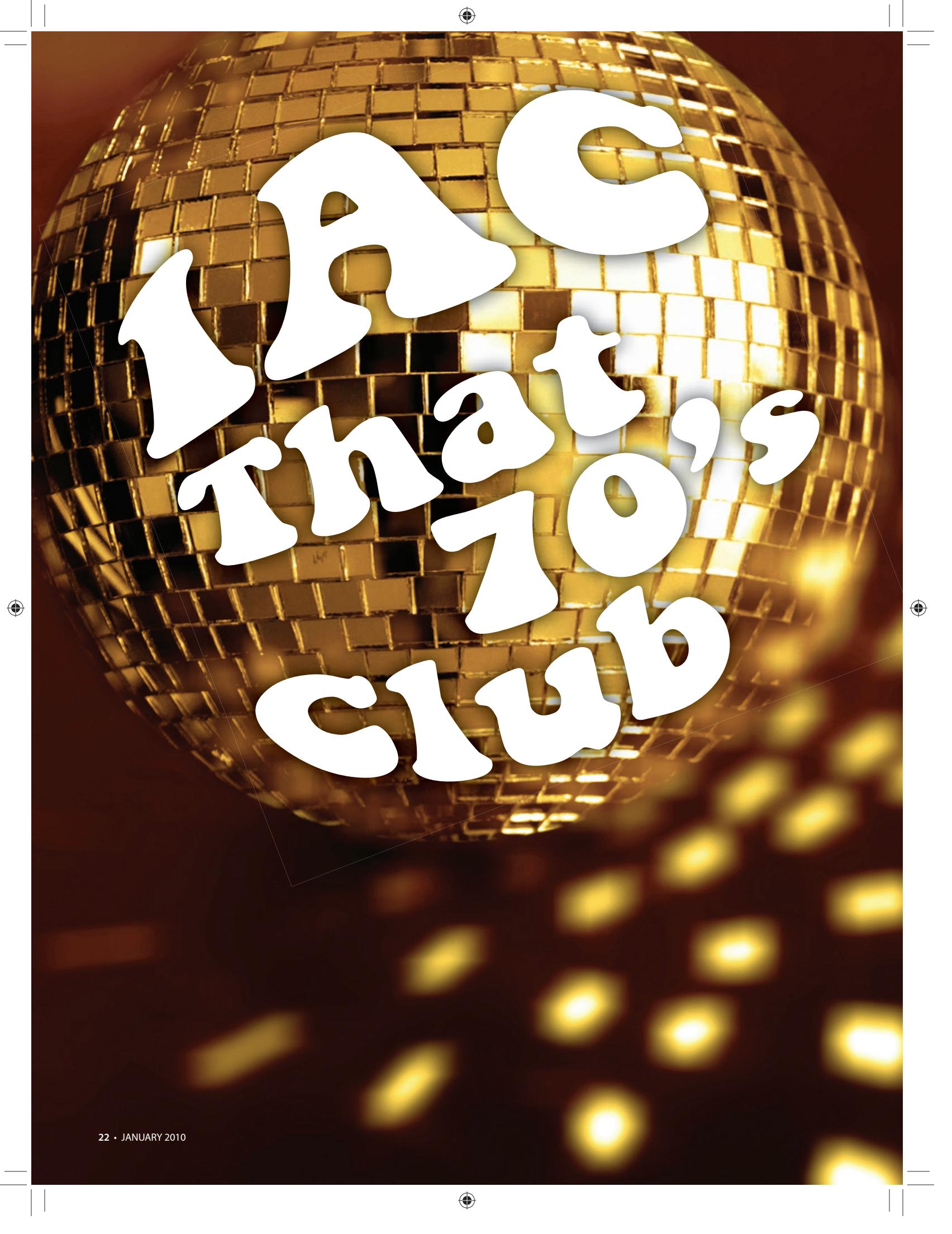
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# NASC that's 70's club



**In March of the year 1970**, the new IAC published the very first issue of *Sport Aerobatics* magazine.

The following quotes are from then president Bob Heuer's inaugural news briefing to the fledgling membership.

Let's reminisce while looking back at the way we were ...



Terry Tubb holding court.

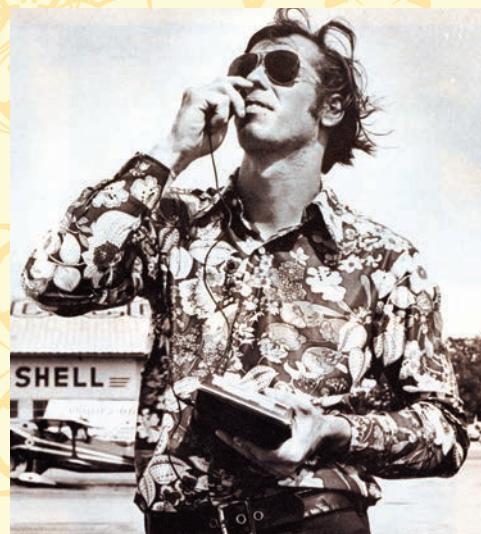
*"The IAC has been officially incorporated as a non-profit organization."*

Ted Koston



Looks like it sure pays to win!  
What do you think, Casey?

*"The IAC will place special emphasis on bringing aerobatics to the 'grass roots' level..."*



Verne Jobst

Steve Erion giving partner, Don DeWitt, a critique on the tape recorder.

*"The aims of the Club are to provide education, a free exchange of information, films, and manuals, and to promote and encourage aerobatic competition and safety."*

*"There are lots of Chipmunks in the Midland-Odessa, Texas area."*

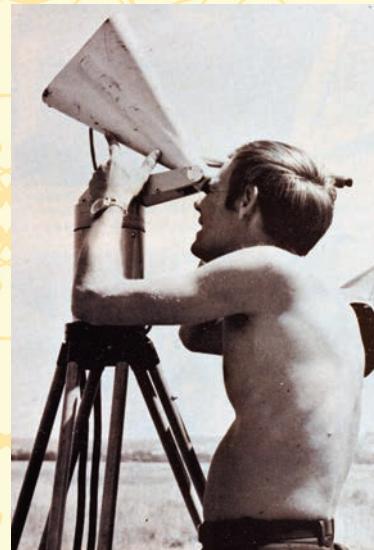


Verne Jobst

"Now, that's a group!"



Chief Judge Duane Cole listens to the Contest Chairman, his brother Marion.



Judy Booth



*"Sam (Burgess) will fly to all the states in the union before the EAA Convention at Oshkosh. Watch for Sam."*



Henry Haigh receives congratulations from his beautiful wife, Barbara, after his fine free style flight.



*"The Club not only needs pilots, it also needs enthusiastic people ... Our Club is open to everyone who is interested in aerobatics."*

*"Membership is building rapidly with more inquiries coming in every day."*



Sportsman Winners (left to right): Ted Stallings, third place, Tom Bishop, second place, Giles Henderson, first place.

John Kepplinger

"Decals will be sent out in late February, two to a member. Additional decals will be available from Headquarters at 50 cents each."

"Jack Williamson is getting a new Zlin from Czechoslovakia in March. There are more and more of these airplanes turning up in the U.S. every month."

Verne Jobst



"And now . . . H-e-e-ere's Jim!  
Master of Ceremonies, Jim Lacey, that is!"



Verne Jobst

Judy Lumley as Don Taylor's sweetheart – his airplane!

"Gene Soucy of Louisville is in the army now, but will be out in time for the Aerobatic Club of America Team Run-offs."

"Carroll Dietz . . . has awarded a free aerobatic course to Bob Heuer at the Annual Polish Air Force Blast."



Verne Jobst

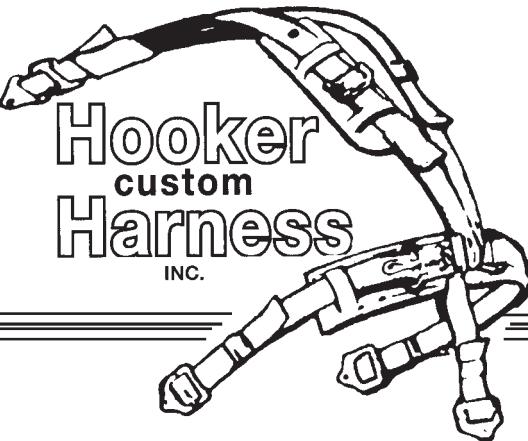
*"Who knows where Zach Reynolds is?"*

Accompaniment for the premier performance of the Aresti Players was provided by Jerry Brandt, left, and John Lumley.

*"Let's work together to make the sport progress as rapidly as possible."*



Pierre LaCroche (and his excellent hat) graced the cover of an early Sport Aerobatics.



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# JUST for STARTERS

Greg Koontz

## Changing Times

In the spring we had a guest, Jannie Van Wyk from South Africa (SA), come to Sky Country Lodge for our aerobatic training. We occasionally get guests from other countries. Usually people traveling to the States on business and taking advantage of the trip to bask in the freedom we have to fly. Jannie was a joy to fly with, and after a great stay and lots of lively conversation over the dinner table, we decided that I was going to go to South Africa and continue his lessons along

with two of his flying companions. Not ever shying from an adventure, I found it an easy offer to accept.

Jannie and his friends, Johan Ferreira and Alan Fergus, keep a gaggle of really cool flying machines on a backcountry strip about 180 kilometers north of Cape Town near the town of Clanwilliam, the country's third oldest settlement. One of these is a Super Decathlon we used for the training. Alan also has a Harvard for some classic warbird flying, and an RV-8 he uses to

go zipping through the local Cederberg Mountains in a sort of obstacle course of great fun flying. That's all I can say about that! He also uses the RV-8 for sport aerobatics.

Soon after my arrival and recovery from the 16-hour flight, we started the training. We might as well have been in my backyard. Typical of anyone, these guys each had their own agenda for learning some aerobatics. Jannie is a straight-laced business flier who is yearning for more adventurous flying. He bought a Citabria to get into tailwheel and maybe learn the ins and outs of mountain flying. Johan owns a Scout and owns the tea farm where the landing strip resides. He's a man of high spirits and enthusiasm, looking to be the best pilot he can be. Alan, on the other hand, is a semi-retired investor with a calculating approach to flying. Alan has already been in some South Africa competitions in his RV-8 and wanted mostly to be critiqued. Overall, an interesting mix of students.

South Africa has a relatively healthy aviation scene. Some of the rules are a bit different, but, overall, flying is accessible and reasonably affordable. SA citizens are living in the age of Mandela, a time they refer to as the rainbow. Cape Town surpassed all my expectations by being a very cosmopolitan city with an upscale pop culture and rich history. It is a beautiful city with friendly citizens who will actually give way to let you merge on the highway! Their patience with me learning to drive on the left was more than I deserved.



Tea time was duly observed in the desert of South Africa.

Flying there is a freedom, but of course, it isn't free. Aero clubs are the norm, as they are in most countries I've visited, helping to spread out the expenses all they can. I saw plenty of people out flying, some in homebuilts like RV-7s and -8s, some in Citabrias, and, of course, the usual Cessna/Beech/Piper stock. It is about like it is here, accessible, but more to those who earn a good wage or are willing to sacrifice to afford it. This makes aerobatics a small part of the big picture, and participation in aerobatic clubs and contests a bit thin. Sound familiar?

The focus organization for aerobatics in SA is the South African Sport Aerobic Club. These guys are no sluffs. The club sends a team to compete in the Advanced World Aerobatic Championship (AWAC) contest and is home to chief international judge John

*"... you would think  
a club like ours could  
double its size with  
an RV class."*

Gailard. The club organizes annual contests and has a great system of classes. A beginner starts in the Basic category and cannot advance until earning at least a 75 percent score. There is a Sportsman class to go to next, and of course, Intermediate, Advanced, and Unlimited classes. So as you can see, it is about the same as here. But after that it starts to differ a bit.

These South Africans decided they were leaving a whole lot of pilots and aircraft out of the loop by sticking to the standard rules. These guys scooped up a whole new group by simply designing a separate RV class. That's right! They write a routine appropriate for the RV pilots/aircraft and give them all a chance to compete in their own arena. Not to stop at that, the club also has a class called the Classic category. This is a contest for noninverted system airplanes to compete with like equipment. Cubs,



The Cederberg Mountains.

Citabrias, Stearmans, and all kinds of homebuilts get a chance to go for a trophy without being scored down for flying a bit of an arc in their rolls!

I am sure this concept isn't new, but what escapes me is why it isn't huge here in the States. With more RVs flying than fire ants in my yard, you would think a club like ours could double its size with an RV class. A Classic class would round up I don't know how many pilots/airplanes that could be getting their first taste of our great sport. Who could even guess how many of those would end up going on to the more advanced categories.

Flying just isn't cheap. Buying a dedicated aerobatic competition plane is unattainable for a great many of us. The truth is: I would be less than comfortable flying in any contest, even Primary, when my noninverted system airplane has to go face-to-face with an Extra while we're all being graded for perfect lines and symmetry. Getting my blood revved up to compete means I have a reasonable chance to go home with a trophy. A category that whittles the competition down to more even ground sounds fun to me. 

*Greg Koontz has been involved in sport aerobatics since 1971. Greg flies air shows sponsored by American Champion Aircraft, is an aerobatic competency evaluator for the International Council of Air Shows, operates Sky Country Lodge aerobatic school, and is a Master Instructor-Aerobatics. Visit [www.GKAirShows.com](http://www.GKAirShows.com). Please send your stories and ideas to [Greg@GKAirShows.com](mailto:Greg@GKAirShows.com).*

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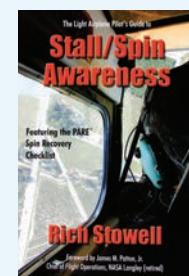


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Stan Burks

# IAC Safety

By Stan Burks, IAC 431160

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>JANUARY</b>				
Mishaps	<b>0</b>	0	<b>0</b>	1
Fatalities	<b>0</b>	0	<b>0</b>	1
<b>FEBRUARY</b>				
Mishaps	<b>1</b>	0	<b>0</b>	0
Fatalities	<b>2</b>	0	<b>0</b>	0
<b>MARCH</b>				
Mishaps	<b>1</b>	1	<b>0</b>	1
Fatalities	<b>1</b>	1	<b>0</b>	2
<b>APRIL</b>				
Mishaps	<b>1</b>	0	<b>1</b>	4
Fatalities	<b>0</b>	0	<b>1</b>	3
<b>MAY</b>				
Mishaps	<b>1</b>	0	<b>3</b>	3
Fatalities	<b>1</b>	0	<b>4</b>	0
<b>JUNE</b>				
Mishaps	<b>1</b>	1	<b>2</b>	1
Fatalities	<b>0</b>	2	<b>2</b>	0
<b>JULY</b>				
Mishaps	<b>0</b>	1	<b>3</b>	4
Fatalities	<b>0</b>	1	<b>2</b>	4
<b>AUGUST</b>				
Mishaps	<b>1</b>	1	<b>0</b>	4
Fatalities	<b>0</b>	0	<b>0</b>	3
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>				
Mishaps	<b>0</b>	1	<b>0</b>	0
Fatalities	<b>0</b>	1	<b>0</b>	0
<b>OCTOBER</b>				
Mishaps	<b>1</b>	0	<b>1</b>	2
Fatalities	<b>1</b>	0	<b>2</b>	0
<b>NOVEMBER</b>				
Mishaps	<b>1</b>	2	<b>0</b>	2
Fatalities	<b>1</b>	1	<b>0</b>	2
<b>DECEMBER</b>				
Mishaps	<b>1</b>	0	<b>0</b>	
Fatalities	<b>2</b>	0	<b>0</b>	
<b>TOTAL Mishaps</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>TOTAL Fatalities</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	

Below you will find a recently released preliminary National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) report.

This report is of a pilot attempting low-level aerobatics in a Starduster SA-300. Please read this report and recognize the familiar elements involved in this accident: low level, maneuverable aircraft, and a group of spectators. If you are tempted to try such a maneuver, please think about the consequences you or your loved ones may have to endure. As always, continue to train, plan, and practice.

**Accident Date:** Sunday, November 29, 2009

**Location:** Zillah, Washington.

**Aircraft:** Mahre Starduster SA-300

**Injuries:** 1, Serious

This is preliminary information, subject to change, and may contain errors. Any errors in this report will be corrected when the final report has been completed.

On November 29, 2009, at 1512 Pacific Standard Time, a Mahre Starduster collided with terrain while maneuvering near Zillah, Washington. The airline transport pilot, the sole occupant, was operating the airplane under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91. The pilot sustained serious injuries. The airplane was substantially damaged. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed.

A witness, who is a remote-control (RC) airplane pilot, was with a group of RC airplane pilots at an airstrip that was used for RC airplane flying. According to the witness, the accident pilot is also a RC airplane pilot. The pilot had been planning on performing a fly-by in the airplane. The pilot flew over the airstrip about 1,500 feet above ground level. The witness assumed the pilot was checking that no RC airplanes were flying at the time. The pilot then returned to the airstrip, flying from southeast to northwest, and performed a fly-by approximately 20 to 30 feet above ground level. At the end of the airstrip, the airplane increased in altitude to about 100 feet and then entered a barrel roll to the right. The airplane lost altitude during the barrel roll and then impacted the ground. The witness reported that the winds were calm. ☺

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