

# EL TORBELLINO

NEWSLETTER OF SAN DIEGO ORBITEERS FREE FLIGHT CLUB

FEBRUARY 2025



## ***Chairman's Corner – Mark Chomyn***

January is in the books and now here comes February. We ended the month of January with a great awards banquet at Filippis Pizza in Kerney Mesa. There was pizza, salad, bread with marinara sauce dip, soft drinks and an Orbiteers motif cake for dessert. Many thanks to our banquet coordinator Linda Piazza for getting it all together and keeping the cost per attendee to only ten dollars. Once again, our awards coordinator Don Bartick (with support from Arline) got all the certificates printed and trophies engraved for the winners. Mike Pykelny was our flight times CPA and mathematician who got all scores tabulated to determine first through third places for the flying event categories. Arline Bartick, our club paparazzi, was busy taking photos of the venue and each individual winner in the various flight classes. If you were a winner your picture was taken by Arline with you holding your award and/or trophy, enshrining you for perpetuity as a free flight champ. The downside of that is that my ugly mug will also be in that photo. But some quick work with a pair of scissors before you frame your image and hang it on the wall can clean up the shot.



First Prize/ Club Champion winners in each flight category were:

- P-30 - Greg Hutchison
- Coupe – Mike Pykelny
- OT/NOS Rubber – David Wade
- Power – Mike Pykelny
- Catapult Glider – Chris Reck
- Hand Launch Glider – Tim Batiuk
- Overall Rubber Power Champion – David Wade
- And the prestigious title of Orbiteer of the Year – Mike Pykelny

Congratulations gentlemen!

As you can see from the photo above there were prizes. Man-oh-man there were prizes. Restaurant gift certificates (Filippis, In and Out, Phils BBQ) model plane kits, SD Maritime Museum passes, two Discount Hobby gift certificates, various aeronautical books, engraved Scale Staffel and Orbiteers water bottles, a custom wood handle Xacto knife and an ARF Burdov-built Bob White Coupe just to mention a few. Congratulations to all winners. Though attendance wasn't as robust as we would have liked that didn't dampen the fun and comradely we had.

We would be remiss if we didn't mention several individuals who made generous donations to the prize tables. John Merrill (a bunch of new model kits, SD Maritime Museum passes, Discount Hobby certificates), David Wade (engraved water bottles, custom wood handle Xacto knife, Burdov

built Bob White Coupe) and William Scott (PT Aviation kits and gift baskets). Thanks to you gentlemen, the prize tables were well stocked. So well stocked it took a bit of time to get through announcing winning tickets and handing out the loot. Fast, furious and fun with numbers being read non-stop.

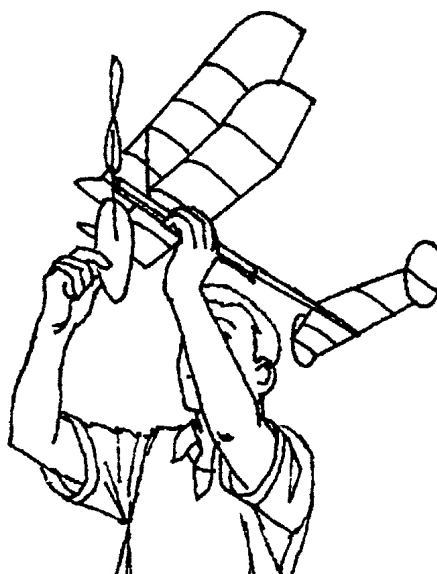
Our next monthly contest is scheduled for Sunday, February 16. From 8AM to 11:30 AM we will be flying Coupe, Glider (HL, CL, and Tow) and Power (Gas or Electric). Hope to see you there. We did get word from a SCAMPS member that the farmer who leases the field had begun some disking of the field and that disking may have included the cleared area we set up and fly within. We hope we can confirm if that is the case and if it is we hope we are able to contact the farmer and have him consider not seeding or planting that area. The problem for us is there doesn't seem to be any contact information available for the farmer. If anyone reading this column has any information in that regard we would appreciate receiving it.

Don't forget that that February 14th is Valentines Day. Make sure you take time to show your wife, partner, or significant other how much they mean to you and your family. After all they are the ones that put up with the balsa dust, glue and dope aroma as you pursue your hobby.

That's it for this month.  
Mark

*"Hand gliding cannot tell you if the ship is in perfect adjustment but only shows that it is not radically out of trim".*

Easy-Bo ½A gas free flight model by L.N. Bryant in the 1951 Air Trails Annual



## Messerschmitt 328A Pulse Jet Powered Bomber Interceptor

By Mike Jester

Around 1942, as losses for the Luftwaffe began to pile up in the air war over Germany, the German Ministry of Aviation (RLM) conducted a desperate search for game changing bomber interceptors. Many radical designs were proposed and some, like the Me 328A, advanced to the full-scale testing stage but were later abandoned. This design is fascinating but due to readily predictable technical shortcomings it should never have gotten off the drawing board. The concept was to use a pair of simple pulse jet engines on an inexpensive, mostly wooden airframe. An Me 328A bomber interceptor was projected to cost one-third of the cost of either an Me 109 or FW 190 fighter. The pulse jet was proven to be a successful low-cost power plant on the V1 buzz bomb. However, it was ill-suited for a manned fighter that could intercept allied bombers. First, the pulse jets could produce unequal thrust leading to asymmetrical stability issues. Second, they produced enormous vibration that could eventually shake the wooden airframe apart. Third, they were not efficient at high altitude where the American B-17 bombers regularly flew their missions. Desperate times produced other radical designs such as the Me 163 rocket propelled interceptor and the Me 262 twin turbojet interceptor. Had the latter been produced in high numbers starting in 1942 it may have changed the outcome of the air war over Germany, but only if the average 30-hour life of its turbojets was substantially extended.

### ME 328A PULSE JET FIGHTER

Scheme 1 - Conjectural markings for 'Yellow 4' of III./KG(J)54, 1944.

ENCORE E MODELS  
1:72 Scale



Squadron Products  
Color Reference

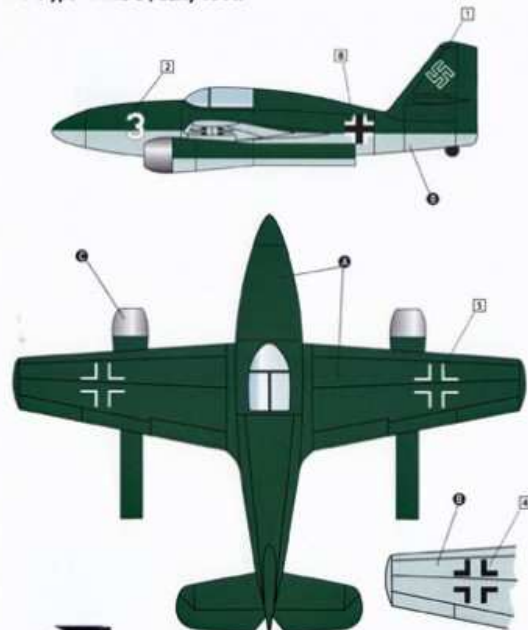
 RLM 81	 RLM 82	 RLM 76	 RLM 94
Brown Violet Approximately FS 30045	Light Green Approximately FS 34128	Light Blue Approximately FS 36473	Yellow Approximately FS 33538

For these paints and all of your other modeling needs, go to [Squadron.com](http://Squadron.com)

### ME 328A PULSE JET FIGHTER

Scheme 2 - Conjectural markings for Prototype 'White 3', Early 1944.

ENCORE E MODELS  
1:72 Scale



Squadron Products  
Color Reference

 RLM 83	 RLM 76	 Natural Metal
Dark Green Approximately FS 34083	Light Blue Approximately FS 36473	Natural Metal

For these paints and all of your other modeling needs, go to [Aeroscale.com](http://Aeroscale.com)



## Korda C Tractor - Old Time Rubber Stick Model - Refurbishment Completed

By Mike Jester



In an article I wrote that appeared in the last month's edition of this newsletter, I described my construction of a replacement for the worn-out fuselage of my Korda C Old Time Rubber (OTR) Stick model. It has been a great flier for me but the original fuselage has taken a beating after five years of flying in contests. I covered the new fuselage with Polyspan fabric for durability. After shrinking the fabric covering with a heating iron, I sprayed it with yellow Design Maser floral spray paint. This paint is much lighter than regular enamel paint. I used an old spray can that was given to me from Larry Miller's inventory of free flight supplies. The paint was probably at least ten years old, but it was still good. However, I am not happy with the incompatible shades of yellow of the original wing and the new fuselage.



My old carved 17-inch prop could not be used with this new fuselage because the rectangular plug on the nose block for that prop was not compatible with the 3/32-inch plywood face plate on the new fuselage. It has a 1-inch diameter round hole for receiving a round plug. So, I made a new 17-inch prop with laminated sheet balsa wood blades and a new nose block with a round plug. I installed a radio dethermalizer system on the new fuselage. If this model starts getting into trouble or if a max has been achieved, I can push a button on a small hand-held RF transmitter and the stab will pop-up to a 45-degree angle. I plan to install a sheet balsa wood pocket in the open area on top of the fuselage below the center section of the wing for carrying a GPS transmitter. The plan for this model that was designed by Dick Korda was first published by Frank Zaic in his 1937 yearbook. Contrasting different eras, my version of this classic OTR model will be carrying a lot of high-tech electronics. There is a slight weight penalty for carrying the 4-5 grams of the GPS transmitter and its battery. However, I am willing to accept this handicap to dramatically increase the odds of recovering this model should the RDT fail to activate when triggered or if a boomer thermal keeps it flying high despite the stab being tilted.





# Outdoor Contest



Date: March 29 and 30, 2025

Time: 8 to 11:30 a.m.

Location: Scamps Field in Perris, CA

## List of Events

### Mass Launch

Saturday 8 a.m. Pilot's Meeting

8:30 a.m. WWI Mass Launch Photo

8:35 a.m. WWI Mass Launch

9:30 a.m. WWII Mass Launch Photo

9:35 a.m. WWII Mass Launch

Sunday 8 a.m. Pilot's Meeting

8:30 a.m. Greve/Thompson Mass Launch Photo

8:35 a.m. Greve/Thompson Mass Launch

9:00 a.m. 2x Peanut Mass Launch Photo

9:05 a.m. 2x Peanut Mass Launch

### Fly Either Day\*

1. Rubber Scale (judging at the field)

2. Simplified Scale

2. Dime Scale

3. Embryo Endurance (ROG)

4. Golden Aged Combined

5. FAC 2Bit +1 and Jimmy Allen Combined (ROG)

6. ARF Glider contest total of 3 flights (winch or high start)  
(winch and high start will be provided)

\*All flights must be made on the same day.

### Contest Director

William Scott

wscott127@mac.com

(619) 701-2457

### Fees

\$8 for 1 event

\$3 for each additional event

Maximum \$20

### Hotel Accommodations

Studio 6 Suites

480 S. Redlands Ave

Perris, CA 92570

(951) 943-5577

## FROM THE WORKBENCH - J.Merrill



Greetings and happy February!

First, I'd like to express my gratitude to Linda for all the work, planning, organizing, decorating, and everything else she puts into making our annual awards banquet such a treat every year. This year was certainly no exception, everything went really well and a good time was had by all.

As for modeling, I haven't been progressing as much as I thought I would be. The Hawker Typhoon seen in these pictures is almost done, with just a little more to go. I decided to finish it in the 1939 color scheme of the prototype, with black and white undersides and pale blue on top. I was lucky I had just enough of the right color tissue to do the job.

I don't expect to get much performance out of this one, but it's been a fairly entertaining build anyway. I may try to enter it in the next Scale Staffel contest in the Simplified Scale category. That contest is currently scheduled for March 29th and 30th. So, what's on your workbench?



<<< -----Hawker Typhoon----- >>>

## FROM THE WORKBENCH - Part 2

I guess I've been a little busier than I thought in the workshop. In the pictures is evidence of work on 5 different projects, not including the Guillow's Hawker Typhoon shown earlier.

I have finished the P-30 'Echo', with the exception of installing a DT (not sure if that will be necessary yet). The color scheme was wife-approved!

The 24" wingspan Bf-109 is almost done, with the exception of the tail struts, canopy, and nose plug. She's in Spanish Civil War colors.

Almost finished with the blue and yellow Fairchild, a "Double Nickel" short kit from William Scott's P.T. Aviation. She needs the 2 windshields, wheels, and prop installed.

I've started 2 new projects too. There's a "twice Mooney" project on the board of a Miles Sparrow hawk, with a 26" wingspan. Haven't gotten too far yet, but I just started a few days ago.

Also new is the Chambers R-1 Chambermaid. It's a neo-dime scale short kit from Volare Products. So far it's a little above my skill level, but I'm trying to figure it out.

That's it for this month, what's on your workbench?

(Pictures of these current builds follow on the next page)







P-30 "Echo"



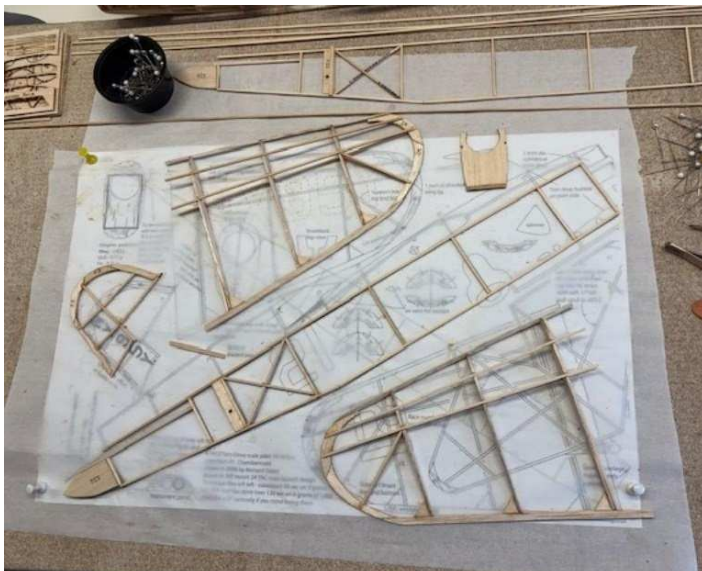
BF-109



FAIRCHILD "Double Nickle"



Miles Sparrow Hawk



← Chambers R-1 Chambermaid



# San Diego Orbiteers

## Flying Schedule 2025

### Taibi Field Perris, Ca

Primary Date	Rain Date	Event	CD
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NEW ADDITION for POWER Event

**EP30**

20 Second motor run

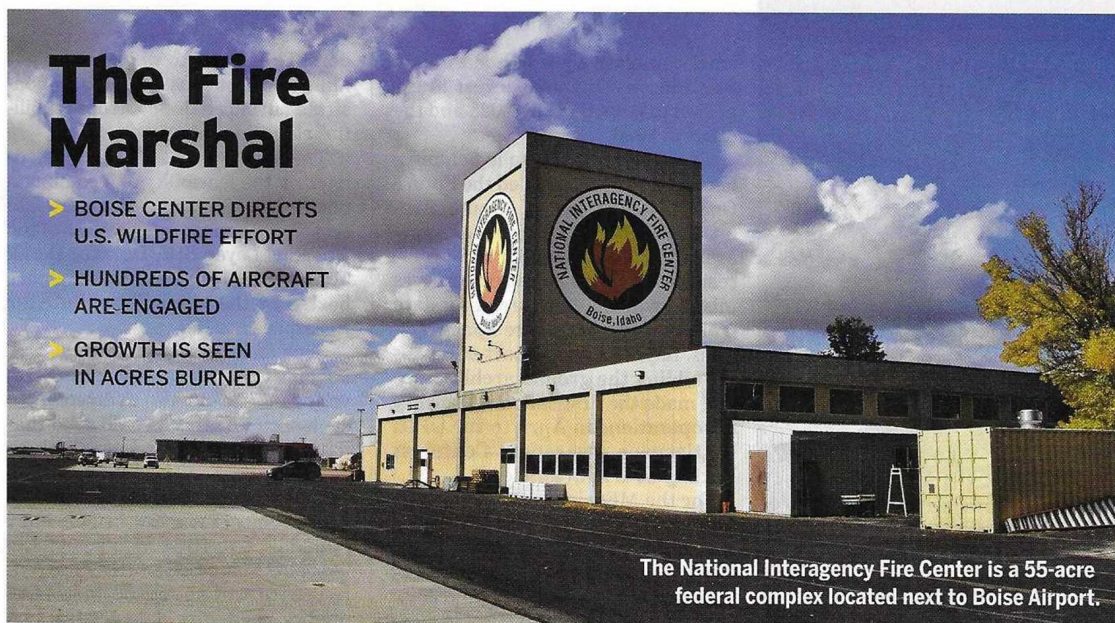
Two-minute Max

February 16	Feb 23	Coupe/Gliders/Power	
March 23	March 30	OT/NOS Rubber/Gliders/Power	
April 6	April 27	P-30/Gliders/Power	
May 18	May 25	Coupe/Gliders/Power	
June 22	June 29	OT/NOS Rubber/Glider/Power	
July 20	July 27	P-30/Gliders/Power	
August 17	Aug 24	Coupe/Gliders/Power	
September	(need dates)	Free Flight Champions, Lost Hills	
September 21	Sept 28	OT/NOS Rubber/Gliders/Power	
October 19	Oct 26	P30/Gliders/Power	
November 7,8,9		Dual Club, Lost Hills, Ca.	
November 23	Nov 30	Coupe/Gliders/Power	
December 21		Make-up	mp 1/2025



# The Fire Marshal

- BOISE CENTER DIRECTS U.S. WILDFIRE EFFORT
- HUNDREDS OF AIRCRAFT ARE ENGAGED
- GROWTH IS SEEN IN ACRES BURNED



The National Interagency Fire Center is a 55-acre federal complex located next to Boise Airport.

Bill Carey Boise, Idaho

**T**he response to wildfires on federal lands is orchestrated from an interagency facility at Boise Airport with access to hundreds of aircraft.

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) is a partnership of five agencies responsible for wildland fire management of 674 million acres of federally owned lands, with participation from the U.S. military and state forestry services. Other federal agency partners include the National Weather Service and U.S. Fire Administration.



Wildland firefighters with Great Basin Smokejumpers were inspecting their parachutes during Aviation Week's visit.

Operational since 1969, the center leads the air and ground response to an evolving threat. While the number of large-fire incidents and acres burned can vary from year to year, the average number of acres burned per number of fires has increased in the past 20 years compared with the previous decade. Historically, large fires burned in a sequential seasonal pattern across the U.S.—now they

can happen in multiple geographic areas simultaneously.

"We don't dispatch the aircraft themselves, but we're the ones that make sure the aircraft are available for dispatch," says Michael Reid, aviation deputy division chief with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). "We get them to the geographic areas where fire intensity is at its highest. Then we allow the dispatch and utilization of those aircraft to be managed at a lower level."

An agency of the U.S. Interior Department, the BLM owns and manages the NIFC and is one of its two major users of firefighting aircraft along with the U.S. Forest Service, an agency of the Agriculture Department. They and other agencies draw from a government-owned and exclusive-use contracted fleet of 340 aircraft composed of 29 large air tankers, 35 smaller tankers, 10 single- and multi-engine water scoopers, 161 helicopters, 97 fixed-wing support aircraft and eight specially equipped Lockheed C-130s that can be activated by the military as needed. Aircraft that operate under exclusive-use contracts, which guarantee their availability for a defined period, constitute most of the fleet. The government owns 15 firefighting aircraft.

The federal fleet can be expanded by 700-1,000 additional aircraft through BLM On-Call or Forest Service "call-when-needed" contracts, which depend on the availability of the vendor's aircraft, flight crews and mechanics.

"That is kind of our surge capacity," Reid says. "We lean on that very heavily because we probably don't have as many of the exclusive-use contracts as we would like. That being said, there are certain years when we're not that busy, so trying to rightsize that fleet is always a challenge for us."

## AIRCRAFT TYPES

The BLM leads in contracting single-engine air tankers and amphibious water scoopers, primarily Air Tractor AT-802 turboprops and float-equipped 802Fs that are capable of dropping 800 gal. of fire retardant or water in a sweep.

The bureau uses Bell 205 and 212 medium helicopters



that can carry up to nine firefighters and equipment to remote locations for the initial attack response to a wildfire. They can deliver up to 300 gal. of water to the fire line by bucket or tank. Smaller Airbus and Bell models also insert initial attack resources and often are used for aerial detection and mapping.

The BLM operates smoke-jumper bases in Boise and Fairbanks, Alaska, that are used to train and dispatch parachute-equipped firefighters from CASA C-212, De Havilland Canada Dash 8, DHC-6 Twin Otter and Dornier 228 transports. The Forest Service operates seven smoke-jumper bases.

The Forest Service leads in contracting large and very large air tankers, including the BAe 146, McDonnell Douglas MD-87 and McDonnell Douglas DC-10 as well as multi-engine water scoopers like the Canadair CL-415. It also uses heavy-lift helicopters—Erickson S-64 Air Cranes, Boeing CH-47D Chinooks and Boeing Vertol 234s—that drop water or retardant via a long line and bucket or by using a snorkel that replenishes an internal belly tank.

When contracted air tankers are fully committed or not readily available during periods of high wildfire activity, the NIFC can draw from a supply of eight Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems (MAFFS)—portable water or fire-retardant delivery systems that are carried on U.S. Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard C-130 H/J turboprops. A MAFFS-equipped C-130 can drop 3,000 gal. of retardant in 10 sec. along a 0.25-mi. line.

The Forest Service owns the roll-on/roll-off MAFFS units and supplies fire retardant, which is released through a nozzle on the aircraft's rear left side. C-130s that fly the MAFFS mission are provided by California, Nevada and Wyoming Air National Guard wings and the Air Force Reserve's 302nd Airlift Wing at Peterson SFB, Colorado.

At the request of the NIFC, U.S. Northern Command deployed C-130 MAFFS-equipped aircraft in July to conduct firefighting operations from Channel Islands ANGS in Port Hueneme, California. The move freed other large air tankers in Southern California to fight wildland fires in the Great Basin and Pacific Northwest regions, Reid says.

"We can activate those as needed for surge capacity," he explains. "It happens typically that we will bring them on for a period of time. How long they come on and where they come on is always the unknown."

The BLM started using small uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS) in 2016 for visual observation by ground crews. Since then, policy has shifted to using them more for aerial ignition of prescribed, or controlled, fires, as well as for aerial mapping and infrared heat detection. Both the BLM and Forest Service now use multiple types of UAS to battle wildland fires.

"We're increasingly getting into aerial ignition—that's one of the primary missions we utilize [UAS] for," Reid says. "Historically, we've used helicopters, and we've had aerial ignition devices within those helicopters that can drop fire on the landscape. It's an incredibly risky thing they're doing, and we've made a shift over the past 2-3 years where it's very prevalent that we're using [UAS] to do that same mission."

The fatal crash of a fixed-wing AT-802 Fire Boss on July 10 exemplified the various hazards of aerial firefighting. Juliana Turchetti, a veteran crop-spraying pilot and native of Brazil, was killed in the crash while fighting the Horse Gulch Fire in the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest in Montana.

Flying for contractor Dauntless Air in a four-ship formation, Turchetti was piloting a Fire Boss that was sent to Helena, Montana, from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, to support the Forest Service in battling the fire. The float-equipped tanker crashed into Hauser Lake, a reservoir on the Missouri River northeast of Helena, while scooping water.



**A Dauntless Air AT-802F Fire Boss single-engine scooper descended to collect water.**

"The accident airplane was in the No. 2 position," the NTSB states in a preliminary investigation report. "During its first scoop sequence, witnesses on the lake and the pilots of the two [single-engine air tankers] flying behind the accident airplane saw the airplane make a left turn to the southwest. Subsequently, the airplane impacted a vertical rock face bordering the southern shoreline of the lake, fell into the lake and sank."

The BLM does not break out flight hours between fire and nonfire operations but says wildland fire aviation accounts for the majority of its flight time each year. It reported 4.95 accidents per 100,000 flight hours in the five-year 2019-23 period and zero attributed aviation accidents in 2022 and 2023.

The overall accident rate for general aviation in 2022, the most recent year for which statistics are available, was 5.34 accidents per 100,000 flight hours, according to the FAA.

## RIGHTSIZING RESOURCES

Planning for wildfires is challenging, as the number of large fires and acres burned each year varies. There were 56,580 large fires and 2.7 million acres burned in 2023—a slow year compared with 2022, when 68,988 fires burned 7.6 million acres, according to the NIFC. In 2020, 58,950 fires burned 10.1 million acres.

Aviation Week visited the NIFC in late October, when the nation's available resources for wildfire suppression—ranked by Preparedness Levels (PL) 1-5—had been set at PL 3 by a National Multi-Agency Coordination Group (NMAC) that meets in a second-floor conference room and includes state firefighting agencies.

At PL 1, the lowest level of preparedness, geographic areas across the country can manage fire incidents using local resources with little or no national support. At PL 5, national resources are heavily committed, requiring that additional measures be taken to support geographic areas.



## FIREFIGHTING

The NMAC had set the national preparedness level at PL 5 twice already, most recently on Oct. 17. The preparedness status in October was influenced by wildfire activity at the time and federal agency participation in relief efforts following Hurricanes Helene and Milton in the southeast.

Developing an aviation equipment strategy through 2030 was among the tasks of a 50-member Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission created under the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. In January 2023, the commission produced an Aerial Equipment Strategy Report that recommended improvements to appropriations, contracting, staffing and military interoperability of aviation resources. However, the commission was ultimately unable to establish a total requirement for aviation assets this decade.

"The commission found that the current wildland fire aviation strategy is based on a seasonal model, yet fire seasons are now longer, overlap geographically in ways they previously did not, and indeed, may be full fire years," the report states. "As wildfire seasons increase in duration and intensity, and as the need for proactive risk reduction treatments increases, there is a compelling need to reexamine existing approaches to aviation fleet procurement, use, composition and quantity."

The BLM has partnered with other federal and state agencies on the initial work of an Interagency Fire Aviation Strategy to address items that were identified by the commission, Reid says. In addition, the BLM and other Interior



SENIOR MASTER SGT. PAULA MACCOMBER/NEVADA AIR NATIONAL GUARD

**A C-130 from the Nevada Air National Guard performed a water drop during a training exercise in April 2023.**

Department agencies continue to pursue options to acquire and contract a more modern aviation fleet, he says.

Rightsizing the federal fleet is an ongoing process. "We're working with our interagency partners on an aviation strategy that will help inform the number of aircraft, the ability to support those aircraft with facilities, the personnel and the budget," Reid says. "It's not the first such effort." ☐

## FIREFIGHTING



France's Securite Civile aerial-firefighting agency is one of several European CL-415 operators also acquiring De Havilland Canada's amphibious DHC-515. France's geography—and that of other southern European countries—makes it an ideal place to use amphibians for the aerial-firefighting mission.

TONY OSBORNE/AW&ST



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Junior Members 16 years old or younger - Free

### Submit Dues to Club Treasurer:

Howard Haupt  
3860 Ecochee Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92117-4622

## THE FINE PRINT THE FINE PRINT

El Torbellino is the official newsletter of the San Diego Orbiteers, an Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) Charter Club (#1113) and a California not for Profit Corporation. This newsletter is sent monthly to all paid members, selected exchange and magazine editors. Non-Members may subscribe at \$15.00 per year within the U.S.A., offshore price will be adjusted to reflect the postage required. Materials from El Torbellino may be reproduced on an unlimited basis by other publications, but proper credit is requested.

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING - FEBRUARY 2025

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### New Addition for Power Event

EP30  
20 Second motor run  
Two-Minute Max

- |             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| February 16 | - | San Diego Orbiteer Outdoor Monthly<br>Events: Coupe / Glider / Power<br>Taibi Flying Field, Perris CA, 7:30 am      |
| March 23    | - | San Diego Orbiteer Outdoor Monthly<br>Events: OT/NOS Rubber/Gliders/Power<br>Taibi Flying Field, Perris CA, 7:30 am |