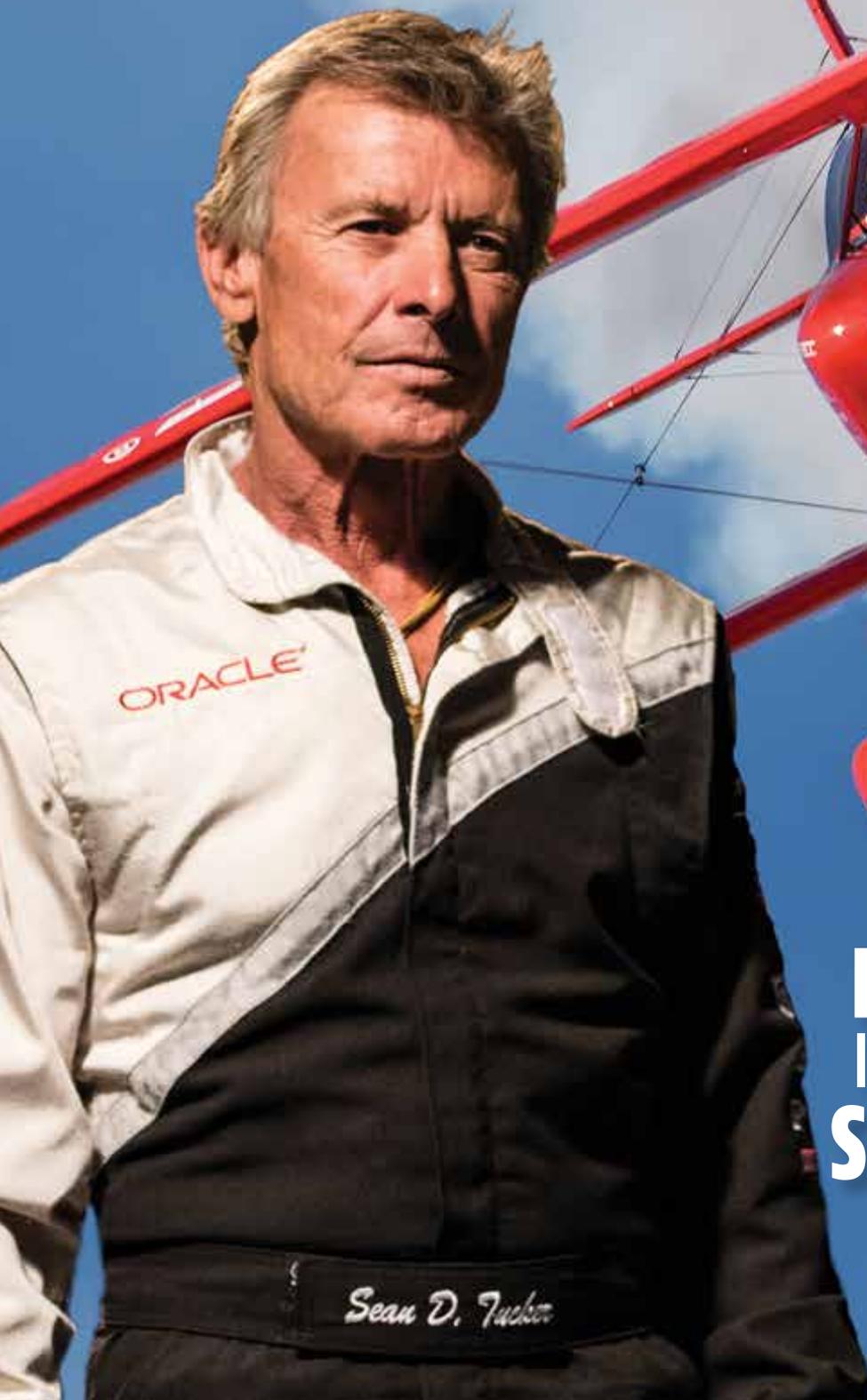


SPORT

January 2016

# Aerobatics

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the INTERNATIONAL AEROBATIC CLUB



**2015**  
**Hall of Fame**  
Inductee  
**SEAN D. TUCKER**

*Sean D. Tucker*



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—Hans Miesler

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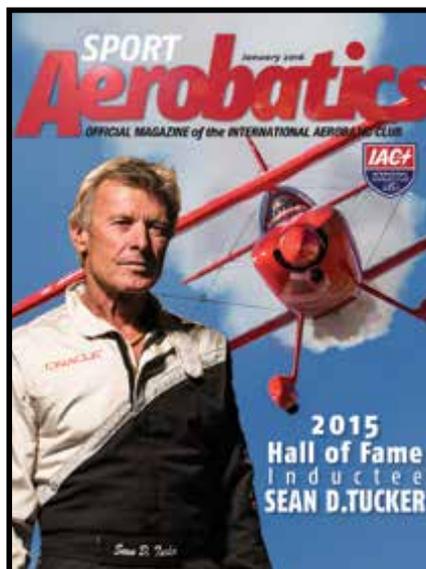
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**REGGIE PAULK**  
COMMENTARY / EDITOR'S LOG

## Volunteers

### The quiet backbone of the IAC

**Laurie Zaleski is a name** many of you will recognize—and one many of you might not—thanks to me.

The November issue of this magazine had dozens of photos of the pilots of the IAC's U.S. Nationals competition, and each of those photos was taken by a volunteer who has dedicated herself to getting the shot—every time.

...the photos you saw in November are a testament to her tireless dedication.

If you've never shot photos that *have* to be taken, the stress involved may not be readily apparent. Imagine trying to get nearly 100 people to pose for you in a way that paints them in their best light. Now imagine trying to get those people to pose for you while their minds are occupied with the task of aerobatic competition foremost in their mind—a difficult task becomes a near impossibility.

For many years, Laurie Zaleski has made the trip down to Nation-

als from her home in New Jersey just to get a very stubborn group of people to smile at her camera—and she's done a darned good job. There are very few people she has missed, and the photos you saw in November are a testament to her tireless dedication. For her, the job starts early in the morning and continues well beyond the point where most of the pilots have left the airport and joined their pals at the hotel lounge.

Not once in the November issue did Laurie's name appear in the attribution for her photos, and as a way of apologizing, I'd like to point out that Laurie isn't just a photographer—her passion resides in Mays Landing, New Jersey, at the Funny Farm Rescue Animal Sanctuary.

Laurie's operation provides round-the-clock care to more than 150 animals on 15 acres. In addition to providing care, Laurie and her staff help increase awareness of animal abuse through education to the surrounding communities.

You can learn more about Laurie's operation by visiting [www.FunnyFarmRescue.org](http://www.FunnyFarmRescue.org). Thank you, Laurie, for all you do! **IAC**

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



**MIKE HEUER**  
COMMENTARY / IAC PRESIDENT, IAC 4

## Knowns, Free Knowns, IAC and CIVA

**MY COLUMN THIS MONTH** draws from an article I posted on the IAC website on November 19 as well as on Facebook, and many of you have already had a chance to read it and comment to me. However, I want to reach out to the entire membership and beyond our web outlets to explain the IAC's direction with regard to competition.

While we did exercise the United States' vote in favor of the new rules, our support for the concept at the CIVA level has nothing to do with what we may do at IAC competitions and with our own official contest rules.

I have appreciated the discussion on the web regarding the new Free Known flight programs CIVA will introduce at the World and European Aerobatic Championships in 2016, both in power and glider, and thank you to all who have provided feedback and opinions. My comments below are rather lengthy, but bear with me as the issues are worthy of further discussion.

Just to provide some background, the idea of the Free Known has been around a couple of years. I can remember one of our Unlimited team pilots discussing the concept with me at

the Nationals in 2014, and so it was no surprise when a working group was formed at the 2014 CIVA meeting in Poland to explore the idea and come back to CIVA with proposals. In the weeks and months preceding the meeting in October 2015, the working group discussed the proposals and presented them to the plenary meeting in Budapest. The Free Known was adopted by CIVA by unanimous consent with the United States voting in favor. There is a very good article on the Free Known on the CIVA news website; it can be found at [www.CIVA-news.com/news/new-free-known-programme-1-explained](http://www.CIVA-news.com/news/new-free-known-programme-1-explained).

While we did exercise the United States' vote in favor of the new rules, our support for the concept at the CIVA level has nothing to do with what we may do at IAC competitions and with our own official contest rules. This goes to the purposes of the two organizations and the reasons for which they were formed.

The IAC is an organization that was founded to promote grassroots aerobatics. That is, to organize local chapters and regional competitions all over the country that are available to all IAC members if they choose to participate. Our other programs are designed to promote safety in aerobatics and to recognize flying skills as well as those who contribute to the sport in other ways. Our Achievement Awards program has helped recognize aerobatic proficiency for more than 44 years now, and thousands of pilots have qualified. IAC's monthly magazine,

*Sport Aerobatics*, has played an important role in disseminating information on aerobatics to all of our members 12 times a year. On our website, we have literally thousands of pages of information available to anyone, as well as member-only areas that are provided as a benefit of your dues. The IAC has 34 active chapters and sanctions 40 competitions a year. All of this is accomplished thanks to a dedicated volunteer corps as well as our full-time employees in Oshkosh. We have a lot going on, and we are proud of it.

Since 1982, the IAC has had a letter of agreement with the National Aeronautic Association in Washington that gives us contest sanctioning authority in the United States, as well as the responsibility to send teams to world competitions and delegates to meetings of the FAI's aerobatics commission, CIVA. It also awarded us the job of naming national champions, which is accomplished each year at the U.S. National Aerobatic Championships.

CIVA, on the other hand, is in the business of writing rules, providing officials, and supervising world championship competitions. I have been attending CIVA meetings since 1984 as the U.S. delegate, and for 26 of those years I served as CIVA's president. It gave me a lot of experience and insight on how aerobatic competition functions at the international level and put me in touch with

**Please send your comments, questions, or suggestions to [president@iac.org](mailto:president@iac.org).**

people from all over the world who share our love of flying and aerobatics. Americans have served on all of the CIVA subcommittees and have contributed a great deal to the advancement of aerobatic competition. The foundation of the judging criteria found in CIVA rules today was provided by Don Taylor, IAC 3, when he served as the United States delegate back in the 1970s. When the judging rules were overhauled in the 1990s, it was the *IAC Official Contest Rules* that were the basis. Since 1960, there has always been an American presence at world championships in power.

**Each year, after the CIVA meeting is held, it is the responsibility of the IAC Rules Committee to report its recommendations on what should be adopted from the latest round of changes at the world level.**

This sets the stage for the next part of this discussion. As a matter of policy, set by your board of directors, there has been considerable synchronization of CIVA rules with IAC rules since 1982. Things like the size of the aerobatic box (1,000-meter cube), altitude limits, Unknown figures, and the use of the *Aresti Aerobatic Catalogue* are areas of alignment. Our rules deviate considerably when it comes to contest administration, weather requirements, and other technical details. These rules are designed to make local contests possible and easier to organize and run. Without going into much detail, it can generally be said that an IAC contest is a much different animal than an FAI aerobatic championship, as our rules are clearly made for smaller, regional events as well as our Nationals.

Each year, after the CIVA meeting is held, it is the responsibility of the IAC Rules Committee to report its recommendations on what should be adopted from the latest round of changes at the world level. Many of these changes are routine and small. However, this year was a different story as CIVA adopted a huge change to the format of world competitions that would require a lot of work to adopt in our rules. Aside from the technical aspects of implementing these changes in IAC rules, there was the issue of member comment. We publish the proposed rules changes every year so members can see what we are considering and they can offer their comments. Those

member comments, for this last IAC board meeting, amounted to 23 pages of very detailed and articulate remarks for the board to study prior to the meeting. While a relatively small number of members sent us e-mails, those who wrote did an excellent job of providing feedback and input to the board.

Because of the short time between the CIVA meeting (held on October 24-25) and the IAC board meeting (held on November 4-5), there was no chance to offer the members any time to comment and provide the required feedback that we encourage in the interests of openness, transparency, and being responsive to our members. Therefore, none of these changes could go forward in 2016.

However, aside from this, there were larger issues. As some of you have stated in your own posts, what is our purpose, what are our objectives, and do we need to be in lock step with what CIVA is doing? Shouldn't we have, as our priority, the best interests of our members at all times and not the small number who participate in world competition? These are good questions.

The fact that we want our team pilots to be well-prepared for their entry into world competition has been a given for a long time. The argument has been made that these pilots should fly the same sequences to the same set of rules when they are flying here in the United States as they will at the world level. However, we also should note that these are the best pilots America can offer, they are astonishingly talented, skilled, and experienced, and they will train to whatever may be required under the guidance of the best coaches they can find.

We also noted, in our research, that many team pilots do not avail themselves of the opportunity to fly local IAC contests. In Advanced, many more team pilots do so—but in Unlimited, some pilots do not fly regional competitions at all. So the argument does not hold up. There is no right or wrong here, as each team pilot has limited time and resources, and may prefer to spend that time and money on concentrated training. Some of our best pilots in the past, like Leo Loudenslager, seven-time national champion and 1980 world champion, never flew a local IAC contest. Each pilot must decide what is best for him or her.

We have a lot of pilots out there who have no aspirations to fly in world championships and only desire to enjoy this wonderful sport within their own personal constraints. Our organization of nearly 4,000 members has about 450 competition pilots, and so there are a lot of people out there, including those who volunteer at these events, who deserve our full attention.

Therefore, the IAC board of directors, when it met in Oshkosh on November 4-5, decided not to adopt the new CIVA flight programs in 2016 and took the

further step of providing direction to the IAC Rules Committee to not adopt any such rules indefinitely. The IAC will stick with its well-proven, traditional flight programs well into the future. Of course, the door is never shut on any proposals that might improve competition, increase participation, make our contests more fun and enjoyable, as well and introduce new people to this wonderful sport. It is our policy that following CIVA with this latest set of changes would not do so.

Thus, we find ourselves at a crossroads. The IAC and the United States will now go its own way. We will develop our own Known sequences from here on out—for all categories—and I also expect some “dialing down” of the difficulty level of some of our categories. I have already received wonderful feedback from Pitts pilots who really like the new Advanced and Unlimited Knowns. It is our policy that those legacy airplanes—indeed, the ones that built our sport—not be chased away from competition by ever-increasing difficulty. That is a recipe for organizational suicide.

That said, I think the new CIVA flight programs will work well at world championships. Those competitions are flown by many pilots who are, for all intents and purposes, professionals. While some of our pilots fly air shows to support their competition

activities, we do not have any professional competition pilots here. Sponsorships are not as easy to acquire here in the United States either—for teams or individual pilots.

While I have talked mostly about the Free Known, there was also the issue of eliminating the Free Program and the introduction of additional Free Unknowns. Free Programs have been around for decades, and we saw no reason to delete them. Free Unknowns are generally not workable at local, weekend contests with limited time and personnel, though we will continue to use them at the Nationals and for team selection.

I am excited about the possibilities. In the past year or so, we have been trying hard to build a “new IAC.” We are growing again, and we are putting an enormous effort into improving our services to you, the member. The IAC will go its own way, as we believe it necessary to survive and grow. We have an excellent leadership team in place, dedicated to our original purposes and objectives, and we will do our best to provide you the very best IAC we can.

Remember, our theme for EAA AirVenture this year is “Aerobatics –Grass Roots to the Top of the World.” That theme will extend to our magazine here in the months ahead and the direction the IAC takes as we build and upgrade our organization. **IAC**

**YEAH, WHOOHOO, YEE-HA!**



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BY MIKE HEUER

## 2015 Third Quarter Achievement Awards Posted

BY LORRIE PENNER, IAC AWARDS CHAIR

Congratulations to the following individuals who have applied for and received Achievement Awards from flying in a non-contest environment (Smooth Achievement), or at a contest (Stars Achievement) in the third quarter of 2015.

As a reminder, First time Primary or Sportsman Stars or Smooth Award Applicant will receive their first award patch for free. Applicants for Glider or Power Primary or Sportsman Achievement Awards should fill out an application and only send payment for additional patches, pins or decals. The first patch will be shipped at no charge. Applications may be found at: <https://www.iac.org/legacy/achievement-awards-applications>

(NOTE: The first number depicted before the name indicates the number of people who've achieved that particular award.)

### 3rd Quarter

- 1198 Dave Watson . . . . . Primary Smooth
- 1199 Don Hendrickson . . . . . Primary Smooth (free patch)-with CFI
- 1200 Wayne Roberts . . . . . Primary Smooth
- 723 Dave Watson . . . . . Primary Stars
- 724 Jonathan Apfelbaun . . . . . Primary Stars
- 725 Barrett Hines . . . . . Primary Stars
- 726 Ron Smith . . . . . Primary Stars
- 727 Malcolm Pond . . . . . Primary Stars
- 728 Wayne Roberts . . . . . Primary Stars
- 912 Dave Watson . . . . . Sportsman Smooth
- 913 Mignon Gery . . . . . Sportsman Smooth – with CFI
- 914 Dennis Parks . . . . . Sportsman Smooth
- 915 Wayne Robertson . . . . . Sportsman Smooth
- 1535 John Shavinsky . . . . . Sportsman Stars (free patch)
- 1536 Barrett Hines . . . . . Sportsman Stars
- 1537 Ron Smith . . . . . Sportsman Stars
- 1538 Wayne Roberts . . . . . Sportsman Stars
- 508 Dave Watson . . . . . Intermediate Smooth
- 509 Wayne Roberts . . . . . Intermediate Smooth
- 734 Barrett Hines . . . . . Intermediate Stars
- 735 Sean E. Van Hatten . . . . . Intermediate Stars
- 736 Wayne Roberts . . . . . Intermediate Stars
- 284 Dave Watson . . . . . Advanced Smooth
- 336 Michael Lents . . . . . Advanced Stars
- 337 A.J. Wilder . . . . . Advanced Stars
- 338 Wayne Roberts . . . . . Advanced Stars
- 169 Dave Watson . . . . . ALL FIVE
- 38 Dave Watson . . . . . ALL TEN

All award recipients since 1970 may be found on the following Achievement Award webpages:

Power: <https://www.iac.org/legacy/power-achievement-awards-home>

Glider: <https://www.iac.org/legacy/glider-achievement-awards-home>

Visit [IAC.org/lifetime-membership](https://www.iac.org/lifetime-membership)  
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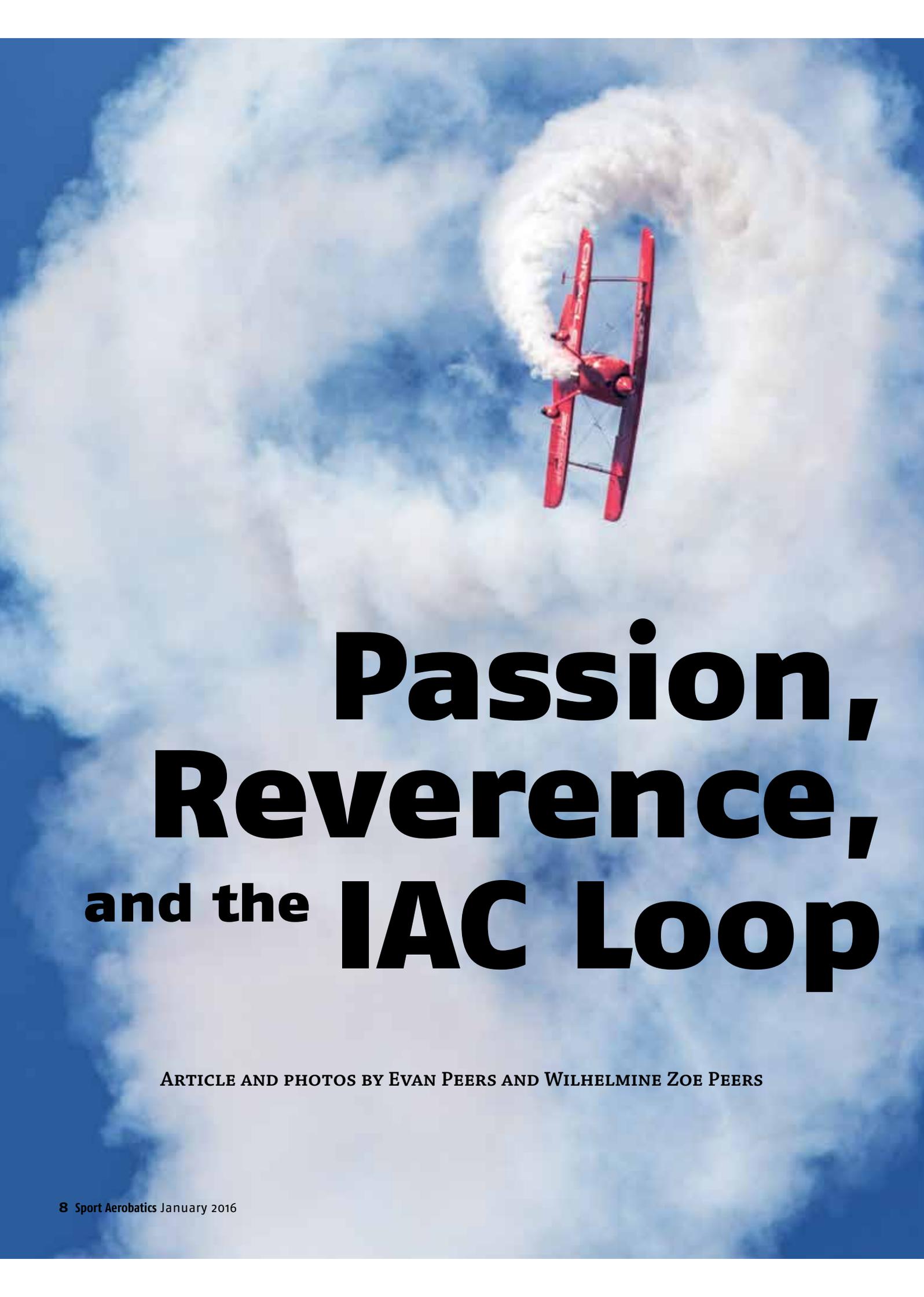


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PHOTO BY EVAN PEERS, AIRSPACE MEDIA



# Passion, Reverence, and the IAC Loop

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY EVAN PEERS AND WILHELMINE ZOE PEERS

**Sean D. Tucker.** This name alone is synonymous with passion, with showmanship, with respect. He has become one of the most experienced aviators in the industry and the most generous of mentors to fledglings in one of the most dangerous sports: low-level aerobatics.

He is a showman. A mentor. A motivational speaker. A spokesperson for many organizations and an evangelist when it comes to aviation safety. He is chairman of EAA's Young Eagles program, a role he takes on with the highest level of commitment to give kids an opportunity to be exposed to the magic of flight, to be inspired, to understand the challenges, and to train to fly safely. The many organizations Sean is involved in are proud to have his support. His involvement with aviators of all ages and all skills is widespread, and is well recognized, yet he remains grounded. He has won the most prestigious awards, yet he remains humble. He has earned all of them by respecting the privilege of flight.

### **Origins and the Mentorship of the IAC**

Sean began his career in the early 1970s with "a lot of action and not a lot of skill or talent," he says.

He flew his first air show in 1976. Having crashed his airplane in 1979, he says, "I lost my dream. Then I had this opportunity to get my dream back. In 1986 I got a Pitts, I joined the IAC, and I did it right."

He began the journey anew, a journey that he recognizes he is still on.

The training and the mentorship he encountered, the camaraderie, the community, and the safe environment that members of the IAC provided to him he calls all-important. He reflects on the friends he made in the IAC who mentored him. His heroes were IAC members.

"They gave me feedback and taught me how to fly as an aerobatic pilot. They are the reason I'm successful today in this endeavor called air show flying," he says.

Without that help, without that guidance, he recognizes that he may not be here today.



**Sean D. Tucker**

"I tell everybody, if you're going to play this game on this level in this arena, if you're going to thrill and share what we love, the magic of flight, be an IAC member first. I don't care what category you fly. Get to 75 percent or better, because champions . . . fly with passion, they fly with discipline, they fly with commitment. And most importantly, we as IAC members fly with reverence. That's what makes it so magnificently beautiful. And that's why the FAA allows us to dance in the sky."

### **The 2015 Aerobatics Hall of Fame**

The International Aerobatic Club Hall of Fame recognizes those men and women who have made outstanding contributions to aerobatic flying. Aerobatics is a unique blend of pilot and machine. Inductees of the Hall of Fame have made a significant impact to aerobatic flying.

The Aerobatic Hall of Fame inductee for 2015 is Sean D. Tucker.

"I am very humbled and honored because this is my family," starts Sean during his acceptance speech. "I'm so lucky to fly in front of about 6 million people a year, and to share something very visceral in the human spirit, and that is called the joy of flight."

"The IAC took me under their wing, and they showed me how to be a champion. They beat it into my head about the reverence and the opportunity we have for aviation, and what is so powerful about it."

"Everything that is righteous about America is what we believe in, and we are a movement. I'm honored to be here, and so proud to receive this award tonight."



An aerial ballet by father and son. Eric Tucker flies Steve Wolf's custom Pitts, with Sean slipping through with the Oracle Challenger III.

Today, after 25,000 hours of flight time, he is still learning, still pushing the envelope, always expanding his boundaries as a performer and as a pilot.

Although getting older, his devotion to the art form is even greater than ever.

"It is not about front flipping, back flipping, looping, or spinning," he says. "This art form is about being in the sky, moving in the third dimension, making designs, and creating joy."

With each performance he can see the joy he creates in those who

are just amazed at what these airplanes can do.

### **The Makings of a Legend**

Sean grew up in Southern California as one of seven children. They were not really an aviation family, but his father was an avia-



tion attorney. He watched his father graduate from college and from law school, and then learn to fly as a route to understand the field while representing airline companies.

In his early teens, he experienced one of his life's defining moments with his dad.

"I got to fly with him once when I was 14 years old. I remember he was taking an instrument flight in the morning, going toward Bakersfield, California, and it was dark and foggy. We climbed through the clouds and burst into the sunrise."

In that moment his perspective

changed. "First of all I knew there was a God, and second I knew I wanted to fly airplanes."

His beginnings were challenging. By age 17, Sean was in the air. Using money he received from his parents one Christmas, he started taking flying lessons.

"It took me two years to solo, because there wasn't enough money. Then it took me another two years and 55 hours to get my private license."

It turns out that this now-accomplished aviator was scared to death, often panicking at the controls.

"I should have flunked my private pilot's check flight because I think I closed my eyes when I did power-off stalls. I was so fearful and so afraid. So here I was, a certified pilot, who kinda lucked out and got through."

He got by, but he knows he was not a safe pilot.

"Because I was not a confident pilot," he begins, "I was terrified of stalls, of losing control."

Looking back today, he understands that panic turns everything into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Bad things will happen because fear is such a huge, all-encompassing, powerful emotion. He knew that to overcome that fear he needed to learn more.

"In 1974 I took an aerobatic course from EAA member Amelia Reid, after just 55 hours of flying."

That course was only 10 hours, but it changed his life.

"I was flying in a Citabria. An ECA, beat up, junk. I remember the first time we rolled that airplane and all the dirt fell from the floor and onto me. I recovered the roll, and I went, wow—airplanes can really do that? I want to do it again! Amelia taught me how to do it. And from there I fell in love with aerobatic flight."

### **Young Eagles, So Every Kid Can Fly**

Young Eagles is the greatest aviation movement to inspire youth.



Sean's passion for imparting the magic of flight has made him a natural as chairman of the EAA Young Eagles. He also has founded his own non-profit organization, "Every Kid Can Fly."



This year, with Sean as its chairman, the program will fly its 2 millionth kid, a milestone in terms of the nation's awareness. More than 8,500 pilots take 60,000 kids flying each year. Like many at the IAC, they are volunteering their time, their passion, their money. And they are not rich; they just want to share something that has changed their lives—to open the door to another world to these kids.

"They are our true heroes. I'm very humbled to get to be the spokesperson, to be the chairman, following in the footsteps of Sully Sullenberger, Harrison Ford, Cliff Robertson, and

Chuck Yeager. In fact I called Harrison, because I want him to fly the 2 millionth kid because he was there first and deserves that honor. I'm very proud of this movement. EAA members are something very special. Everybody should take a flight lesson, so they can touch an airplane and feel the sky. That's why I am involved with the Young Eagles, so the kids can touch it, feel it, rising above the Earth, look down, and see how everything kinda makes sense."

### **Credit Through Competition**

When asked about his first contest, Sean says humbly, "I

competed in the Intermediate category—because I thought I was too good to fly Sportsman. I was flying an S-1C."

First he was disqualified for mechanical faults—his S-1C was not up to par. Then they fixed his airplane, tested all the ailerons, and gave the plane a new paint job. The year was 1984, and Sean scored 14th—last place—because he was "too cool" to fly Sportsman, which would have actually provided him with the necessary basics. He admits his ego was too big.

He was working with Wayne Handley as a crop duster flying helicopters. By 1986, Sean decided to fly in the Advanced category. He vowed that he would be a national champion. Wayne Handley was already an Unlimited champion—a superstar. Sean set his vision on earning the national champion award in 1988. But this time he went about it seriously committed. His commitment was enforced by his belief that if he received that award, that trophy, he would gain legitimacy as an air show pilot. He would have some credentials. By then he would be able to afford branching out into the air show business.

He found an S-2S, for which he paid \$32,000. It was a brand-new airplane. It was pure magic. The previous owner walked away from it after Mount St. Helens erupted, covering it in volcanic dust.

"It was a wonderful flying machine, and it was beautiful," Sean exclaims. "And it was mine!"

He was serious, so he hired Allen Geringer as his coach, flying with him twice a week after work.

"I would practice seven days a week. And I started winning in the Advanced. I started winning and winning. Allen was my coach all the way through to the Nationals, and he and I came home with the trophy."

Sean still flew some contests after that win, though his air show career also began to take off. He still had the crop dusting business as well as an aerobatic flight school



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Tutima Academy's Extra 300 used for aerobatic and unusual attitude training. This aircraft is also seen frequently at West Coast IAC competitions.

supporting the bills. By gaining credibility with the other performers, the champions from the IAC, he felt respected.

"It was a magnificent time. I had enough experience, and my dream was coming true. Sean's first sponsorship happened in 1992, which

enabled him to make a living as an air show pilot. Even so, he kept his helicopter company, since sponsorships are renewed yearly, and he wanted to make sure he could provide for his family of two children, his wife, and their home. In 2000, he sold the helicopter business, but

kept his flight school because, "It does good things."

#### ACE

The first air show Sean attended was at NAS Point Mugu in California. There were thousands of people. Live-fire ordnance was being demonstrated in those days. He marveled at all the impressive warplanes such as Phantoms and Tomcats. Then he saw Bob Hoover perform for the first time. He was larger than life, greater than great. Flying his P-51 Mustang, he stood up to the quality of entertainment that these high-powered military jets were doing.

"I was inspired by those magnificent men and their flying machines. Air shows are not only a motivator to get into aviation, pushing your own boundaries, but it is a metaphor for being free, and having courage. Aviation inspires people. It enchants. It drives you to dream."

Sean flew his first air show in 1976. Since then he has evolved his skill, and he has honed his partnership with his airplane. He has en-

chanted millions through his smile, his passion, his generosity of giving a window to the sky—whether it be with smoke swirling in trail of a little red biplane, or as a calm and confident gentleman taking a nervous reporter for the ride of her life, never pushing beyond the limit.

It is no doubt that air shows, and especially low-level aerobatic air show performances, are dangerous. They leave zero margin. That's why today Sean is an aerobatic competency evaluator, an ACE. Pilots need to be certified by an ACE before performing at an air show. He is firm, considering evaluating pilots only if they are IAC members, because he knows that the IAC has provided a safe and nurturing environment to learn their skills.

### Tomorrow's Champions

"If I see a kid who really wants to fly, I'm going to nurture him. I'll make sure that I keep him alive. I'll be there for him to do it right,

to achieve his dream, and to make him successful. We have some great kids out there, like Sammy Mason. He is passionate and improving on his already admirable skills. Same with Kevin Coleman. They are the ones who are going to do it! They need to stay in the IAC, for the safety standard, mentorship, and community, and we will help make these kids successful, because we need the future!"

Sean names some of the mentors he looked up to and had respect for: mentors like Bob Hoover, Charlie Hillard, Paul Poberezny, and Tommy Jones. They cared about his future and helped mold him. Before Sean's first flight at Oshkosh, Charlie advised him that he had one chance to impress during his performance—"Stay above 250 feet and don't scare anybody." When he landed, he got the thumbs-up and was welcomed into the family that is EAA.

This scene has played out ump-

teen times from Sean to Sammy, who flew for the first time in front of a hundred thousand aviation family and friends at AirVenture 2015—in a red Pitts biplane. Alongside the adrenaline charge, it has got to be humbling. It certainly tests your nerves, strains your concentration, and proves that true passion and honest mentoring are keys to achievement and success.

The troops that are in the IAC are probably the most caring, passionate, empathetic, and the best mentors. They go beyond sharing the magic of flight; they want to keep everyone alive. Sean believes anybody who even wants to consider flying air shows should be mandated to go through the IAC because it's a nurturing environment. It is scary to go into that box.

"With only four judges evaluating, it is imperative that each pilot does better than 75 percent."

Sean exclaims wittingly: "I'm going to get back into the arena and





Mike and Judy Heuer with Colleen and Sean D. Tucker.



Reverence to the art form of aerobatics is one of Sean's primary motivating emotions. Here, he reflects on the power and grace of the Extra 300 during a video shoot at his academy in King City, California.

make it fun. And it will be at the Intermediate level. But I guarantee you—I'll be nervous! And that box is pretty small."

### Academy of Aviation Safety

In 1997, with a goal to improve safety for all levels of pilots, and with a mind on how he built his own confidence, Sean started a unique school—the Sean D. Tucker School of Aerobatic Flight. This unique school offers a variety of courses, including stall/spin recognition and recovery, aerobatic proficiency, low-level mentorship, and forma-

tion aerobatic flight training. The school was so successful that longtime sponsor Tutima Watches offered a partnership, renaming it the Tutima Academy of Aviation Safety. Today his school hosts pilots from major airlines down to grassroots pilots who want to fly safely. He underlines—a confident pilot is a safe pilot. Some well-known names in aerobatics teach and consult at the school: Ken Erickson, Ben Frelove, Bill Stein, Yuichi Takagi, and Chelsea Stein Engberg all take turns imparting their passion and expertise.

"I have great instructors. Peo-

ple come from around the world to train for competition. My guys are safety pilots at contests; we are very pro-IAC. We take them through every level, from Sportsman, through Intermediate, Advanced, and Unlimited. We show them the right way to do it."

Learning to land the Pitts is the best way to teach students how to fly an S-1S. Ken Erickson, Sean's chief instructor, will first teach students to land one of the Pitts.

"I'll watch Ken grab the controls at the last moment and land it safely. He has never damaged it. I am nowhere near that good."

### Fly Further, Follow Your Passion

Sean D. Tucker, at the top of his game, still pushes the boundaries, and still flies a Pitts—now in its third iteration as 260 hp. He has two more Pittses, two Extras, and a T-6 at his flight school.

"Extras are too easy!" he exclaims. "They dance so lightly in the sky. But flying a Pitts—that is developing a skill that goes to the boundaries and requires well-trained pilots."

No matter what you fly, if you have come through the ranks of the IAC, you understand the passion, the commitment, and the reverence of the art form of aerobatic flight.

"New airplanes are fun and easy to fly. They do not teach a pilot how to fly on the feathered edge. Flying aerobatics and pushing your boundaries is fun. Facing your fears changes you as a human being. And learning to fly aerobatics is scary. Learning to technically accomplish each figure, and doing it safely, an aerobatic pilot becomes more confident in their skill and ability. So when there is an emergency, they are easy, they do not panic, it is a nonevent."

Thanks to members like Sean D. Tucker, the IAC community is nurturing, launching the passion of aerobatic pilots while building skills, abilities, and confidence. **IAC**



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# The Curtis Pitts Memorial Trophy

Bill Bainbridge and B&C Specialty Products

BY GORDON PENNER,  
THREE-TIME MASTER CFI-AEROBATIC,  
FAA GOLD SEAL CFI, PAST PRESIDENT IAC 34



Mike Heuer awarding trophy to Will Bainbridge.



Nathan, Bill, and Will Bainbridge at Oshkosh.

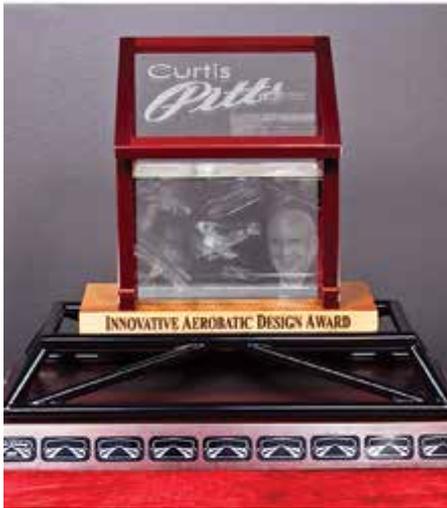
Congratulations to Bill Bainbridge and B&C Specialty Products on winning the IAC's Curtis Pitts Memorial Trophy for 2015!

I am not alone in considering Bill Bainbridge and B&C a leader in the field of components and services for experimental aircraft, and a great friend to aerobatics. Many people I know in aerobatics were pleasantly surprised when B&C won, simply because they assumed that B&C had already won in the past.

The Curtis Pitts Memorial Trophy is one of the IAC's nonflying awards, and according to the IAC website, "The purpose of this award is to recognize an outstanding contribution to aerobatics through product design. General guidelines are that this person or company is one that has created a product, or products, that has made a lasting impression on the world of aerobatics."

B&C Specialty Products has been making "a lasting impression on the world of aerobatics" now for 35 years, but surprisingly this trophy has only been around since 2006. I thought it was much longer. Past winners include:

- 2008 - Kevin Kimball
- 2009 - Herb Andersen
- 2010 - Gerd Muehlbauer
- 2011 - Walter Extra
- 2012 - Jim Rust
- 2013 - Philipp Steinbach



Curtiss Pitts Memorial Trophy.

Bill Bainbridge and his people at B&C, some of whom have been with him for more than 20 years, are in some pretty good company.

As for the establishment of this award, again from the IAC website, “This award was donated by the Pitts family in the memory of Curtis Pitts. From the first design called the *Little Stinker* in 1944 to the Model 14 designed just before his death in 2005, Curtis Pitts was one of the most prolific aircraft designers in aviation history. His designs, and their descendants, forever changed the world of aerobatics.”

Curtis Pitts’ example is definitely one to aspire to.

B&C Specialty Products has that sort of history of pushing for higher and higher goals. Its alternators and regulators were on the Voyager aircraft for its record-breaking around-the-world flight, and they were also on the White Knight mother ship that carried SpaceShipOne. B&C has now created standby power systems that are OEM installations on Bonanza, Piper, and Mooney aircraft—not bad for a company that Bill started in his garage in 1980.

When I was a new pilot in the Sportsman category, I asked experienced pilots about ways to drop weight in my aircraft (besides going on a diet or cutting

off my head!) but still have high reliability. To meet all my criteria they all recommended B&C. I can now say without reservation they were right.

For me it started with the oil filter adapter I bought for my 1974 150-hp Decathlon. I wanted to put an oil filter on my engine instead of just having a screen, but the area between the back of the engine and the firewall was tight, tight, tight. B&C’s oil filter adapter was perfect for my needs. The assembled oil filter and adapter fit, barely, into the allotted space. I have observed many experimental aircraft with similar space restrictions.

Milled out of a block of solid aluminum, I think the B&C oil filter adapter is a work of art! I found myself staring at it in wonder as I pulled it out of the box. It allows clearance for the tachometer cable and the oil filter return line, and has a place for the oil temp sensor. Every detail was accounted for.

Later I installed the lightweight alternator that had been PMA’d onto Super Cubs. B&C walked me through the process that won me the 337 approval of the FAA inspector for the alternator. Bill Bainbridge also helped advise me on the rewiring of my electrical system for a higher level of safety and less chance of electrical fire. The designs were beautiful, and they were robust enough that I have never had a reliability complaint.

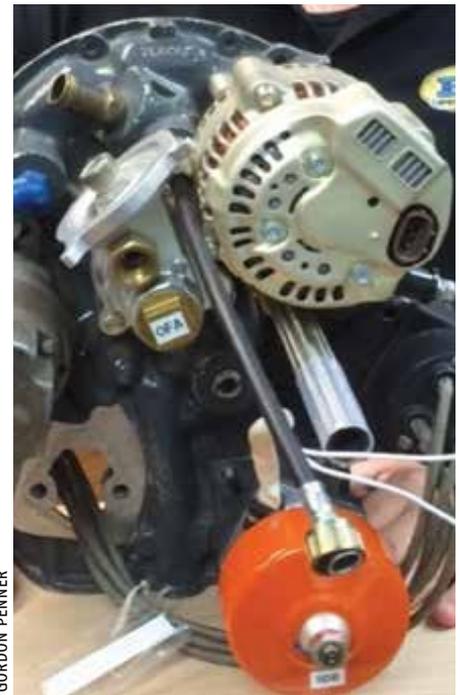
As if that level of detail is not enough, everything you need to install B&C’s products is included, and the paperwork is correct in every detail. With Bill Bainbridge, it is not just about the device. All the service details are lined up as well.

On its website B&C says, “Our approach is different: If it’s a part you’re going to need in a typical installation, we try to include it—period. It’s just one way we try to serve you more effectively...and more completely.” I can personally

attest that statement is true.

I now have an S-1 Pitts Special and am putting B&C products on it. Its lightweight starter is trouble-free, and it starts the engine even though I have higher compression pistons. There are many similar testimonials on B&C’s website and Facebook page that can be investigated.

I love what I call the “Orange Hockey Puck” alternator—the SD-8. It mounts on the vacuum pump pad on the back of my Lycoming engine. It weighs only 2.9 pounds, which is much lighter than the 12-pound alternator it replaces. It pumps out 8 amps, which is what one needs to run a radio, a transponder, and to charge up the battery after start. I love this thing. My hangar mate has one on his RV-8 as a standby/emergency alternator.



GORDON PENNER

The B&C SD-8 alternator “Orange Hockey Puck”, oil filter adapter, and the BC462-H lightweight alternator on an engine accessory case.

To demonstrate that Bill Bainbridge thinks specifically about making aerobatic pilots’ lives better, check out the Aerobatic Perform-



## Meet the Airshow Pilots Who Fly With B&C!

**Skip Stewart** (Skip Stewart Airshows)



Photo: Skip Stewart Airshows



Photo: Skip Stewart Airshows

**TUESDAY  
JULY 29  
10:30 AM**

**Rob Holland** (Ultimate Airshows)



Photo: Scott Stearns



Photo: Scott Stearns

**WEDNESDAY  
JULY 30  
1:00 PM**

**Melissa & Rex Pemberton** (Pemberton Aerobatics)



Photo: Marklager Photography



Photo: Kevin Joyce Photography

**THURSDAY  
JULY 31  
10:00 AM**

**Kirby Chambliss** (Chambliss Aerobatics)



Photo: Chambliss Aerobatics



Photo: Chambliss Aerobatics

**THURSDAY  
JULY 31  
12:00 PM**

**Kyle Franklin** (Franklin's Flying Circus & Airshow)



Photo: Check Six Photography



Photo: Check Six Photography

**FRIDAY  
AUGUST 1  
1:00 PM**

AirVenture Oshkosh 2015 B&C exhibit booth schedule as posted on the B&C Specialty Facebook page.

mance Bundle and the Aerobatic Performance Bundle II.

The Aerobatic Performance Bundle includes:

- 1) The lightweight starter
- 2) The SD-8 alternator
- 3) An overvoltage protection kit
- 4) The VAC-2 adapter

The Aerobatic Performance Bundle II is the same as the one above except it includes the 20-30 amp BC410 lightweight alternator and the LR3C linear

regulator/controller.

The VAC-2 is another work of art like the oil filter adapter. It is a vacuum pump pad adapter for the lightweight alternator that also includes a provision for better oil flow into the inverted oil system. Again, B&C pays attention to the details.

I think all of the above products show a strong desire to meet the somewhat specialized needs of experimental and aerobatic pi-



GORDON PENNER

Greg Jones, General Manager.

lots and builders.

Top air show and competition pilots show their regard for Bill Bainbridge's products. My friend Brett Hunter, air show pilot, U.S. Unlimited Team member, and the winner of the silver in the Unlimited category at this year's National Championships, has been singing Bill Bainbridge's praises to me for years.

Brett told me, "You begin looking for an item for your aircraft either based on price or performance, and then you become a B&C customer for life based on their service and product support."

On Brett's air show airplane, the Magnum Pitts (a modified Pitts Special S-2C), and on the MXS he flies in competition, he has the oil filter adapter, the SD-8 alternator, and the improved voltage regulator.

At Oshkosh this year Kirby Chambliss, Skip Stewart, Rob Holland, Melissa Pemberton, and Kyle Franklin made appearances and answered questions at the B&C Specialty Products booth in the exhibit halls. That's a pretty good indicator of Bill's impact on aerobatics.

Shown on page 21 are the two new alternator products from

### BC460-H ALTERNATOR

Introducing the "Next Generation" 60 amp Alternator you've been waiting for! Our new BC460-H saves both weight AND money – without sacrificing performance or reliability. Rather than following the "Bigger is Better" line of thinking, the BC460-H has been designed for superior efficiency (maximum output-per-pound). With modern avionics and LED lighting, aircraft electrical systems are becoming more frugal than ever. What is needed is not a bigger alternator, but rather, a better alternator – one with genuine quality, durability, and efficiency. The BC460-H is built with that in mind, featuring heavy-duty sealed ball bearings, two internal cooling fans, and a precision dynamically-balanced rotor (rare in the industry, but standard on every B&C!). More than that, it has three attachment points for stable mounting, and provision for external, aircraft-style alternator control with over-voltage protection. The BC460-H may be used in either a 14 volt or 28 volt electrical system, and includes your choice of Boss (Wide Deck) or Case (Narrow Deck) mounting brackets, attachment hardware, belt tension arm, high-performance belt, and pre-wired field connector assembly. Weight: 7.1 lbs.



Now Accepting Pre-Orders!

BC460-H ALTERNATOR, 60 AMPS, w/ BOSS MOUNT OR CASE MOUNT BRACKET KIT (HOMEBUILT) \$530

### BC462-H ALTERNATOR

Here's a game-changer – the new high-performance spline-driven alternator from the company that pioneered the spline-driven alternator over 20 years ago! The BC462-H continues our tradition of innovation, offering robust performance and superb efficiency. Rated at a nominal 35 to 45 amps @ cruise RPM, it mounts on a standard AND20000-spec accessory pad, and is built to the same quality standards you've come to expect from B&C. Every BC462-H features a CNC machined billet aluminum mounting flange for superior durability. Inside you'll find heavy-duty sealed ball bearings, two internal cooling fans, a precision dynamically-balanced rotor (a B&C quality essential), and a special "shear section" drive coupling. Suitable for 14 volt or 28 volt applications, the BC462-H is designed for aircraft-style external control, and may be used as either a Primary or a Standby Alternator, depending on your electrical system configuration (see page 11 for our line of Alternator Controllers/Regulators). Includes mounting gasket and pre-wired field connector assembly. Weight: 6.75 lbs. (preliminary).



Now Accepting Pre-Orders!

BC462-H SPLINE-DRIVEN ALTERNATOR, 35 TO 45 AMPS (HOMEBUILT) \$699

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Two new alternators as posted on the B&C Specialty Facebook page.

B&C. It is continuously pushing forward to create components that are of lighter weight and stronger construction for both experimental and production aircraft. I show this for two reasons: 1) to point out B&C's continual search for improvements in the products it puts out, as well as the new products that fill the needs of experimental and aerobatic pilots, and 2) to show the level of detail that goes into its products. A lot of us in the experimental world don't have a lot of money to throw around. For us this stuff has to work the first time out, and it has to last.

Bill has been ably assisted for many years by General Manager Greg Jones, and recently Bill's sons Nathan and Will have joined the effort at B&C. Together with their many longtime employees, B&C Specialty Products will be assisting experimental and aerobatic pilots for many years to come.

Again, congratulations! **IAC**

# My Journey to the Pitts

## Back to the IAC

BY HANS MIESLER

My journey to the Pitts took 40 years. It was four decades ago, in 1974, that I owned a Taylor Titch for the sole purpose of flying aerobatics. I'd fly my Cessna 120 from Livermore, California, across the Altamont hills to Tracy, where I kept that little bird. It was painted Day Glo Red, with a slightly modified Continental 85-hp engine pulling a 735-pound gross-weight airframe.

A senior United Airlines captain took pity on my stressed financial status and gave me free berth under the wing of his Stearman. From Tracy I would launch for New Jerusalem, a little-used auxiliary naval runway. And, for half an hour, we would do all that was possible in a noninverted aircraft, returning to Tracy with me feeling like a fighter pilot spent with exertion. The little Taylor Titch filled the need for the

action I developed just two years earlier flying the Cobra attack helicopter in Vietnam.

Since I am an A&P, I did most of the maintenance work myself, which kept the cost of having two planes manageable. Soon, however, my aviation career took a turn, and I had to sell the Titch and downsize to the Cessna 120 since it has two seats and my wife enjoyed the traveling we did in that plane.

No longer did I have aerobatic capabilities, though, at times, I did push the C-120 a bit more than it was intended for. The backcountry flights into various turf and gravel strips for camping and sightseeing would have to do for now, and my aerobatic aspirations took a back seat.

Fast-forward to 1985 when I discovered the Van's RV-4 after test-flying the first one built in Idaho. It was love at first sight, and as is often said, "If she looks good, she probably flies good, too."

Good is an understatement. By the end of that fateful day, I ordered my first of several kits with which to complete my own RV-4. The flight characteristics of that plane can only be described as cutting butter with a hot knife. All three axes are extremely well-balanced with controls very light and positive. For all intents and purposes, she's a Walter Mitty fighter plane, and only lacks the sound of a Merlin or round engine to complete the picture.

I was on fire and completed my RV-4 in 33 months—even including the flop tube in the right tank. I was in a hurry to get her flying. The cost of adding fuel injection, inverted system, and so on precluded me from installing that initially, but I would do so later.

As things worked out, my RV-4 proved to be very good at everything, including aerobatics, formation flying, dogfighting, traveling and backcountry camping, and even air show work. By that time I'd had 26 years of nearly trouble-free flying in all sorts of missions, and as the saying goes, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," so the inverted stuff was never added.

I just did not want to change a formula that had been working efficiently and safely for my wife and me, and it became obvious that a second plane would be needed. So in 2014, after flying out and looking at several Pittses for sale in Texas, Alabama, and Arkansas, I



found one virtually under my nose here in Colorado. It was snuggled in the corner of a hangar for 10 years after its primary owner

landings, and my self-esteem came back slowly.

With new tires, since the old ones had a very pronounced flat



passed away, and the partner did not have time to fly it. Compared to what I had seen, it was simply a beauty that needed some attention, and a deal was made. Exactly 40 years earlier I purchased the Titch for the same reason...to have a plane for the sole purpose of aerobatic flying.

With just under three hours in an S-2B, I proceeded to check myself out in the spring of 2014. Wow, not sure if 10 hours would have prepared me for the next few hours and multiple landings in this Pitts S-1S. I began to question my 4,000 hours in taildraggers, but was able to resolve some of the quirks by adjusting the Grove gear with a slight bit of toe-out. This definitely made for better behavior on

spot, and new shims, taking off and landing actually became fun and certainly more challenging than the RV-4 ever was. Having more room in my brain to go out and enjoy aerobatics, and not be obsessed with the landing to follow, I found that extended air work brought the CHTs to unacceptable levels and that would be rectified.

Also, during the post engine run-up, the left mag coil was failing with a 350-mag drop, and was replaced. The PS-5C pressure carb had to be sent in soon after my initial flights, as the engine would falter and hiccup if and when I wanted to go around. Not a comfortable feeling when the fan that keeps you cool tends to lag in response. Oh, I could go on, but let

# Man, I've done hundreds of loops, but to get a perfect IAC loop takes lots of gas and yet more loops.

it be said that after nine weeks of downtime, a thorough annual inspection, and repairs to include a new instrument panel, *Chica Chiquita* is more beautiful than ever, and willing to dance.

Having solved the mechanical issues, it was time to concentrate on the Sportsman sequence for 2015. My previous aerobatics experience was in conjunction with air show flying, where the crowd is happy to see an airplane full throttle, making noise at 2900 rpm and blowing smoke while using most of the runway with accepted maneuvers for the RV.

It is very satisfying to put on a show for the local folks with an airplane that I built at a completion price of \$23,500 in 1989, but it lacks the precision required for the IAC maneuvers judged by one's peers, and that is my next goal. With that in mind, I recruited my neighbor Jim Woolworth, who flies a Skybolt, to attend the judges school presented by DJ Molny this spring, and also have Jim help with coaching from the ground.

I planned on competing at Seward, Nebraska, from June 26-28, which gave me about three months after completing the major annual inspection. We identified several nearby areas far enough from our airport and airways, and Jim would drive out to critique my performance. Man, I've done hun-

dreds of loops, but to get a perfect IAC loop takes lots of gas and yet more loops. So it went with all the maneuvers. It's a humbling experience and exhilarating as well.

My wife would come out to support me as she has always done in my aviation endeavors, and she planned a nice road trip from our home in Colorado to Seward. We departed on Wednesday to get some practice and see what a box looked like from the air. This would be my first flight in a box, and I wanted to acclimate to the lower altitude, since most of my practice had been at 8,000-9,000 feet above mean sea level (MSL).

My flight was in two legs to get a feel for cross-country fuel consumption. The tailwind pushed me along at 170-185 mph for a total en route time of 2.7 hours, while Mary's drive took a bit over 10. This day would be two firsts: a cross-country in a biplane—not any biplane but a Pitts—and the first time in a box getting ready for competition.

With two days before the official first day of practice on Friday, I managed to fly several times, but the markers were not in place yet. At that altitude, the Pitts climbed like a homesick angel, and the small cumulus clouds drifted into the box, presenting a physical marker for the top of the box. It was great fun, but I was told that if the judge can't see the maneuver it's a hard zero, and

to modulate power as required.

Friday arrived, as had most of the competitors. The scene was lively, with an assortment of competition planes. I was happy to see that we had a good turnout of Pittses, perhaps even outnumbering the mono-planes. How many, I can't say—I was getting into my zone, fretting about how small the box was.

There was no need to fret, as I was assigned Steve Johnson, who became my mentor. Those who know Steve will recognize his entrance from his Tennessee drawl and larger-than-life demeanor. He and countless other higher-category competitors helped all they could with constructive suggestions and critiques. I can't say enough about how welcome Mary and I felt at our first contest, and frankly, it was a pleasant change from what I had seen at a couple of IAC meets in the early '90s.

With excellent weather and light winds on Friday, everyone got in a practice, and planes launched and retrieved with military precision. By that evening I felt as prepared as I could for a newbie and looked forward to the competition flights.

Saturday promised good weather. But before I could fly, I was volunteered to be a recorder for the Intermediate and Advanced fliers, and the rapid-fire comments by DJ Molny gave me an appreciation of the skill required to be a good judge. My stenography ability scored a dismal 0.0 while DJ's scored a solid 10. I'll volunteer to drag out the panels next year.

Soon it was time for lunch, and I minimized my portion to accommodate the aerobatics my stomach would soon sense, as I was either No. 2 or 3 to fly. The caution to stay well-hydrated was appreciated, but one needs to weigh the hydration needs against the need that soon follows, especially for us older guys. Being the newbie, I went over my plane one more time before saddling up and buckling in slowly, enjoying what would be my first

contest, two days after celebrating my 68th birthday. The routine of strapping in gives me that last chance to switch from the RV-4 routine to the Pitts, which is much newer to me. Not to worry, however, the starter, with a friendly demeanor and an umbrella to ward off the sun, went through his checklist and finally I was ready to start.

The start routine on my O-360 Dick DeMars-pumped engine is now very consistent cold or hot, and it starts right up on the second blade. That 76-inch prop rocks those 17-foot wings with a reassuring rhythm as the Lycoming settles down to the normal idle rpm. It sounds and looks like one of those funny cars when they first light up and find their idle. I thought about a lighter prop to decrease the vibration and tension on the hub, but find a certain romance in a prop that is one-third the length of my wingspan. It reminds me of the disparity seen on some of the old fighter planes.

I taxied out and watched for my interval to join the hold area. The air is cooler up there. Nebraska is a beautiful checkerboard of greens all lined up north/south, and the box, with white border markers, looks pretty small at 3,000 feet above ground level (AGL). Finally I was cleared in, and I flew the north border inverted. A few more clicks on my seat belt, and I turned downwind right-side-up to get one more view of the box before turning base.

I dove into the box and leveled at 2,500 AGL and started my humpty just past the Y-axis on the far side of the box. The exhilaration of flying at the lower altitude with the increase in performance nearly caused loss of focus on the half-loop before the downline, but I caught myself and got down to business. The rest of the sequence went well, as did the second flight of the day. I was in pretty good standing, placing second by that evening. The only fly in the ointment is there were several others who were in close hunting, and it would be difficult to hold on unless I performed as well or better on Sunday.

Sunday arrived and brought the infamous Nebraska winds. I believe the weather brief indicated 30-35 knots out of the northwest. My flying order was someplace near the bottom of the list, just before the event ended, and I had plenty of time to ponder how I would handle the box. I managed to get by with just one out, but my figures suffered with my preoccupation of staying in, and I bumped to fourth in the final tally. Now I know we all come to win and take home the gold. But in essence, the competition, and pilots I met, and friends we made were like winning gold, and that's an intangible reward of the highest caliber.

Thanks to Lynn and Ed Bowes and all their volunteers for making our re-entry into the IAC a happy experience. And for other newbies, if you can get Steve Johnson as your mentor for the event, consider yourself fortunate.

IAC

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# World Aerobatic Contest

BY MIKE MURPHY

FORWARD BY NICHOLAS E. D'APPUZZO, EAA 8356

Reprinted from *Sport Aviation*, June 1965.

THE THIRD World Aerobatic Contest, flown at Bilbao, Spain, ended in mid-September, 1964. Competing within the framework of the new FAI contest rules, Captain Tomas Castano of the Spanish Royal Aero Club became the current World Aerobatic Champion. Ladislav Bezak of Czechoslovakia placed second. Russia won first place in the team effort; Spain and Czechoslovakia tied for second.

Viewed by itself, the fact that the champion is a native of the contest's host country is nothing more than coincidence. It becomes more than that, however, when the record of this international contest is examined in detail.

With no intention of detracting from Captain Castano's flawless performance, I must point out that the winners of each of the past world contests have been nationals of the respective host country.

The first World Aerobatic Contest was held in Czechoslovakia in 1960. The winner? Ladislav Bezak, of the Czechoslovakian Aero Club!

In 1962, the second World Aerobatic Contest took place in Hungary. The winner? Jossif Toth, of the Hungarian Aero Club!

When the three contests are viewed as a whole, a disturbing pattern of favoritism and partiality becomes all too apparent. Nationalistic fervor is admirable, be it on the part of an American, Spaniard or Czech, but certainly has no place in the ranks of a supposedly impartial judging committee for interna-

tional competition. The illustration which graphically depicts judges' voting records in the finals of the Spanish competition indicates that nationalistic ties play too heavy a role in judging this contest.

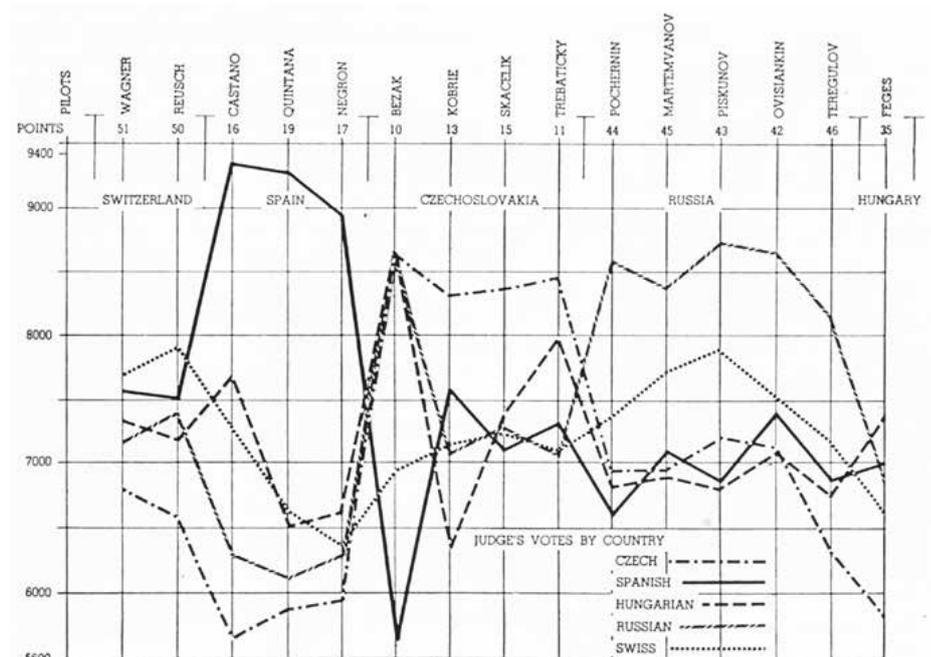
Another plus factor for the host country is the controlled practice time its pilots log at the chosen site for the competition. By the time other contestants arrive upon the scene, the pilots of the sponsoring country are intimately familiar with the competition area and have countless hours of intense on-the-spot practice under their belts.

American competition in the World Aerobatic Contests has been hampered by lack of organization and finances. Although a number of American pilots have turned

in creditable performances at the competitions, there has been no team effort equal to the highly organized aerobatic teams of most other serious contenders, most of which are government sponsored.

The United States was not officially represented in Czechoslovakia during the first World Aerobatic Contest in 1960. American Frank Price did compete in this contest, but as an individual entrant without national sponsorship. With no previous knowledge of the complex rules and procedures, Frank was unable to compete successfully.

Following the Czechoslovakian contest, the National Aeronautic Association became interested in American representation and sponsored U.S. delegates to the rule-





Mike Murphy (open jacket) poses with the United States team at Bilbao, Spain.

making committee meetings in Paris.

The 1962 Hungarian contest caught us unprepared and without finances. Pilots Lindsey Parsons, Rod Jocelyn and Duane Cole volunteered to make up the team. The Parsons-Jocelyn associates had designed and built a new aerobatic airplane which they hoped would make a good showing. Duane Cole planned to use his 90 hp 1936 model Taylorcraft. An accident sidelined the Parsons-Jocelyn airplane prior to departure and the pair, determined to compete, hastily borrowed a Great Lakes from Bob Nance. The airplanes were shipped to Germany by air freight, reassembled and flown to Budapest only one day prior to the competition kick-off. Neither Jocelyn nor Par-

sons had time to practice in the borrowed airplane and were permitted only one familiarization flight over the contest zone.

The American pilots, dog-tired following their long cross-country, inclement weather flight from Germany, spent a sleepless night attempting to decipher rules and design their free-maneuver sequence routines for the first phase of the competition.

In the lottery for appearance position, Jocelyn had the misfortune of drawing the second performance of the day. While in position on the "ready" line, he observed the first pilot make a 360-degree inverted turn in the wrong direction. This convinced Rod that he had misinterpreted the rules, so he made the

same error. Although he flew an excellent contest from that point on, the error removed him from final competition. Duane Cole also missed out on the finals due to a directional error, personal illness and the limited ability of his light aircraft.

From this point on, all U.S. hopes were pinned on Lindsey Parsons, who entered the finals in good position after more than matching the performance of the Soviet Yaks and Czech Zlins with the old Great Lakes. His field position and framing were outstanding throughout the contest. On the final day of competition, Parsons and the other top nine pilots flew their selected free-maneuver sequences. His performance was, in my opinion, the



Mike Murphy works at this judge's table at Bilbao, Spain while Rod Jocelyn assists.



A meeting of champions. Left to right, Capt. Tomas Castano of Spain, 1964 Champion; Ladislav Bezak of Czechoslovakia, 1964 runner-up and 1960 Champion; and Josef Toth of Hungary, 1962 Champion.



Mike Murphy (at left) discusses the meet with other members of the United States team in Bilbao, Spain. At the extreme right is Father F. Lang (CPPS), close friend of Hal Krier, who served as interpreter for the team.

best of the day. The crowd and other participants obviously shared my opinion of the outstanding performance, for Parsons was the only pilot to receive an all-out ovation. It was a shock when the final standings revealed Parsons in fifth place, separated from the winner, Hungarian Jossef Toth, by a narrow margin of 200 points. The judges had awarded Toth 6,200 points to Parsons' 6,000.

I studied the marks given Parsons by the other judges and found that the French judge awarded him over 2,200 points. Two of the "iron curtain" judges (one from East Germany and the other from Poland) and myself were within 30 points of each other, giving Parsons between 1,800 and 1,850 points apiece. The Hungarian judge gave him only 1,100 points, the Soviet judge 1,200, and the Czech judge 1,300. The rules required that the high and low scores be scrapped, which left the average of the middle five scores as the final tally. Thus the 1,100 and 2,200 point scores were eliminated and the extremely low marks given by the Soviet and Czech judges pulled Parsons down to finish fifth.

The U.S. delegation accepted defeat graciously and left Hungary

with the admiration of all the participants. The Soviet and Czech teams submitted protests over "unfair judging." The protests were not accepted and met much disfavor with the International Jury. Perhaps we left Budapest with our "flaps down," but our chins were held high after the excellent performances our boys turned in during the final air show before 200,000 spectators, including dignitaries from many nations.

The FAI conducted two Aerobatic Rules Committee meetings after the Budapest contest. The first, utilizing lessons learned at Budapest, was held to simplify rules, grading systems, and procedures. The location for the next contest was also determined at the first meeting. Russia and Spain sought to host the '64 event. Spain was chosen because they had previously applied for the '62 contest and lost the "coin flip" to Hungary. The second FAI meeting adopted a standard form of aerocryptography which permitted an established mathematical value for all maneuvers.

The painstaking preparations for the '64 contest, made by most of the participating countries, provide an insight into the growing international significance of the

event. They are some indication as well of the organizational and financial gap which we must close if the U.S. is to ever place consistently in the contest.

The Russians, having participated in both previous contests without success, put forth all their efforts toward winning the next championship. Practice was compulsory for all aerobatic pilots and Aero Clubs held numerous contests to choose the leading flyers of the Soviet Union. The team chosen from these contests trained for months under disciplined tutorage in preparation for Spain.

The Spanish Royal Aero Club purchased six new Zlin "Akrobats," but lost two on delivery flights. Upon receipt of the new aircraft, they selected five U.S.-trained Spanish F-86 flight instructors for the aerobatic team and moved them, with their families, to the Bilbao location for several months of intensive practice. When the pilots were not flying, they studied the newly adopted grading system and critiqued their teammates on their daily performances.

The Czechoslovakian Aero Club used the same highly qualified team that performed in the previous world competitions. The team had the latest Zlin "Akrobat" airplanes with a newly developed constant speed propeller control which gave improved performance. As might be suspected, they refused to sell this modification to other Zlin equipped aero clubs.

The Hungarians followed the same system used in choosing their '62 team. Fifteen pilots participated in a national competition and the best five got "the nod." As it turned out, this was essentially the same team that had performed in Budapest.

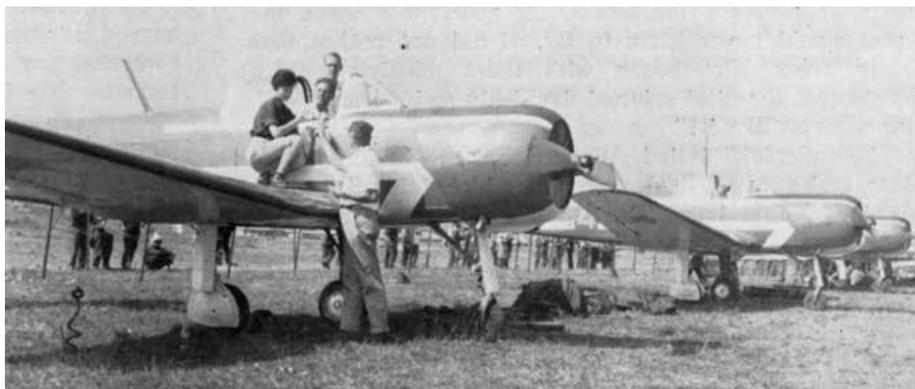
In the United States, a meeting of interested aerobatic pilots was held under the umbrella of the National Aeronautic Association. The group founded the Aerobatic Club of America and made a tenta-

tive selection of the best qualified members to compete for a berth on the U.S. team. Following the election of club officers, each member present pledged \$500.00 to the cause in the event of insufficient solicited donations.

Two months before the world contest, a U.S. team was selected out of those pilots who had airplanes and could make the trip. The financial problem was partially solved by Beverly Howard soliciting a \$3,000.00 donation from an oil company. The National Aeronautic Association used some of their available allotment from MATS to transport most of the personnel and one aircraft to Madrid. Pan American Airways, through Rod Jocelyn, allowed a substantial discount on aircraft airfreighted to Paris. Hal Krier solicited a \$2,000.00 donation from his associate, Bob Fergus of Columbus, Ohio. Lindsey Parsons sold television rights to CBS for \$10,000.00 but had to give the Spanish Aero Club one-half of this amount. After minor delays and frustrations, the U.S. team was soon headed east with fingers crossed.

Both money and patience were paper thin when the group finally assembled in Bilbao. Bob Nance and his Great Lakes had flown to Madrid on MATS with most of the mechanics and other assorted personnel, arriving only the day before the contest. The MATS group rented a pint-sized "you-drive-it" station wagon and drove all day and into the night to reach Bilbao. Hal Krier with his Krier-Kraft and Frank Price with his Bucker were airfreighted on Pan American to Paris with the other mechanics. The group arrived in the nick of time at Bilbao after experiencing clearance delays at Orly Airport for the "strange" aircraft with limited radio equipment.

Due to their late arrival, each of the U.S. contestants was allowed just one practice flight over the contest area. I watched Krier's practice while visiting the Spanish pilots.



Members of the United States team made friends readily Frank Price tries out the cockpit of a Yak-18P as Ludmilla Vasilova of the Russian team explains the aircraft.

Three of these pilots, who had practiced long and hard there at Bilbao, graded Krier's performance as nearly perfect. The Spanish group agreed, in amazement, that his flight was the best aerobatic performance they had ever witnessed. Captain Castano, who later became World Champion, remarked to me that "even with all our practice, we can never beat him!"

Although the CBS television rights money had been a boon in making the trip possible, time began to draw short as CBS camera crews constantly requested interviews and camera flights which consumed valuable hours for the American team. So much time was needed by the pilots to design "free group" maneuvers, study manuals and receive team instruction that all felt unduly rushed. The pilots, assisted by Rod Jocelyn and Beverly Howard, drew sequences, computed and studied until the wee hours to deliver the "free group" routines to the contest committee before the prescribed deadline.

The contest consisted of three flights: Annex I, a published and usually well-practiced compulsory group. Annex II, which consisted of 17 maneuvers, 15 of which were selected by the competing pilots in a lottery while the two remaining maneuvers were inserted by the organizing club as reverse direction maneuvers to permit better framing. Annex III, the "free" group, which consisted of 25 maneuvers

selected by the pilots from among the hundreds catalogued. Pilots strove to choose the maneuvers with the highest coefficient values.

The "free group," in addition to receiving the high coefficient values of 80 points for framing, 40 points for depth and altitude, and 40 points for rhythm as established for groups I and II, were also allotted another 40-point grade for harmony and diversity. The highest scoring pilots (top 30 to 45 percent according to the number of entries) were eligible to compete in the finals. These finals were largely a repetition of the elimination group except that each finalist could submit a new "free group" if he so desired.

Although our team failed to place, I take exception to the Monday morning quarterbacks who claim the U.S. pilots made a bad showing! This was not the opinion of the other judges or of the Europeans with whom I associated while in Hungary and Spain. I feel that the U.S. team made a good impression and left Spain with respect.

American hopes were high at the completion of the compulsory group when only 141 points separated Krier, then in eighth place, from the leader. The seven contestants ahead of Krier were four Spaniards, two Czechs and one Russian. The positions of the Spaniards unquestionably reflected the advantage they held through their controlled practice sessions over

the championship zone. At this stage, former champion Bezak was in 24th place and current champion Toth was in 19th place. Krier busted out of serious finals competition because of a mix-up on his sequence drawing. His master panel sketch differed from that of the judges and, according to the judges' papers, he flew half of his maneuvers in the wrong direction. This brought a grade of zero for half of his routine and ended his chance to get into the finals.

Krier, however, regained a good share of prestige for the U.S. in his superb showing at an all-out air show performance on the Sunday following competition. His performance was unquestionably the best of the day and even more amazing because he was the only one of the 43 contestants who had designed and built his own aircraft. To top this, he and others of the U.S. delegation had sacrificed thousands of dollars in potential earnings to represent his country in the competition.

The Russians were undoubtedly the best equipped team. Their four Yak 18Ps, overhauled to new condition, specially instrumented for aerobatics and containing secret radios, were air lifted to Bilbao with pilots and technical personnel in two large turbo-prop Aeroflot Antonov AN-12 transports. These transports were conspicuously parked in the aerobatic zone during the entire competition. Soviet prestige suffered, however, because of their demanding attitude and juvenile tantrums about trivia. The Soviet judge and his party, for example, refused billeting with the other judges and moved unceremoniously into the hotel housing their team. Another incident, which brought smiles to all but Russian faces, occurred when the Russian team captain stormed into competition headquarters and demanded removal of the Coca-Colas which had been placed in his team's refrigerator by the courteous Spaniards.

In contrast to the Russians' big

production, the Swiss team, operating without sponsored funds, ferried two modified Bucker "Jungmanns" to Bilbao. Their team members, officials and aircraft spares arrived in a Volkswagen bus. The Swiss pilots had limited practice because each had to pay their Aero Club a fixed cost-per-hour for practice, ferry and participating time. In spite of their modest equipment and finances, two Swiss pilots made it into the finals.

In my opinion, the Swiss Bucker "Jungmanns" and Hal Krier's Krier-Kraft were the best competition aircraft in the meet. These planes suffered less altitude loss and were superior to the low-wing monoplane types in both negative and positive snap maneuvers.

I've often been asked what I consider the winning formula for U.S. competition in the World Aerobatic Contest. I recommend organized sponsorship of an experienced aerobatic pilot who is familiar with all the FAI rules and knows how to aim at the highest point values. The airplane he selects must easily perform all catalogued maneuvers in right and left directions, both negative and positive. His practice habits must parallel those of Olympic sports contestants and he must be assisted by a qualified instructor observing from a judge's position on the ground. Flawless, precise and rhythmic flying will carry a contestant through the eliminations into the finals. Winning the finals requires the same ingredients plus fair and impartial judging. Biased judging continues to be the major problems for competing pilots, regardless of their nationality.

Captain Castano, the current World Champion, flew flawlessly throughout the latest contest. This demonstrated his inherent abilities as well as months of obvious preparation. However, in my opinion, any one of a number of the top finalists could have won this honor if nationalistic affiliations had not prevailed over true evaluation.

An FAI Aerobatics Committee meeting is scheduled on February 4 and 5, 1966. In addition to selecting the location for the 1966 event and making the necessary rules changes, the committee will undoubtedly select a method of judging. We hope that a more equitable judging procedure will be adopted.

If nationalistic fervor continues to predominate over fair play, I recommend that we confine our activities to the United States, where integrity prevails. **IAC**

Though Mike Murphy has passed away, he will still be remembered by many *Sport Aviation* readers. Some will remember Mike as the official starter of the major air race events at the National Air Races: The "Goodyear", the "Thompson," the "Tinnerman", and others. Going back even further to the late '30s, Mike was the originator of three of the most novel acts ever to appear at the Cleveland Air Races: The take-off and landing on top of a car in 1936; the pontoon-equipped aircraft taking off and landing on the ground in 1937 and 1938; and the aircraft with two landing gears, landing both right side up and upside down in 1939.

Mike won the U.S. Aerobatic Championship three times and retired the Freddy Lund Trophy. In 1941, he won the International Aerobatic Championship and retired unbeaten in this field.

He officiated at NAA-sanctioned air shows as a judge and referee over most of the U.S. since 1946. He served as the official U.S. International judge at the World Championship Aerobatic Contest in Budapest, Hungary, in 1962 and at Bilbao, Spain, in 1964.

During World War II, Mike was in charge of the glider programming and planning of the Normandy invasion and was the first man to land in Normandy on D-Day. Among his military decorations, Mike received the Air Medal with clusters, the Legion of Merit, Purple Heart, Commendation Medal, Bronze Star, and others. Mike also received civilian awards, among them two FAA Meritorious Awards for Safety.



Mark your calendars for these upcoming contests. For a complete list of contests **and for the most up-to-date contest calendar**, visit [www.IAC.org](http://www.IAC.org). If your chapter is hosting a contest, be sure to let the world know by posting your event on the IAC website.

**Ben Lowell Aerial Confrontation (South Central)**

Saturday, May 21 – Sunday, May 22, 2016  
 Practice/Registration: Friday, May 20  
 Power: Primary through Unlimited  
 Location: Sterling Municipal Airport (tentative) (STK): Sterling, CO  
 Region: South Central  
 Contest Director: Bob Freeman  
 Phone: (303)709-6465  
 E-Mail: [2bafree.man@gmail.com](mailto:2bafree.man@gmail.com)  
 Website: [www.iac12.org](http://www.iac12.org)

**Lone Star Aerobatic Championships (South Central)**

Friday, June 10 – Saturday, June 11, 2016  
 Practice/Registration: Thursday, June 9  
 Rain/Weather: Sunday, June 12  
 Power: Primary through Unlimited  
 Location: TBD (NA): TBD  
 Region: South Central  
 Contest Director: J. J. Humphreys  
 Phone: (940) 564-6673  
 E-Mail: [jjhump1@brazosnet.com](mailto:jjhump1@brazosnet.com)  
 Website: [www.iac24.org](http://www.iac24.org)

**Ohio Aerobatic Open (Mid-America)**

Friday, June 17 – Saturday, June 18, 2016  
 Practice/Registration: Thursday, June 16  
 Rain/Weather: Sunday, June 19  
 Power: Primary through Unlimited  
 Location: Bellefontaine Regional Airport (KEDJ): Bellefontaine, OH  
 Region: Mid-America  
 Contest Director: Samuel Weaver  
 Phone: (937) 681-2680  
 E-Mail: [piperj3cub46@gmail.com](mailto:piperj3cub46@gmail.com)  
 Website: <http://www.iac34.eaachapter.org/>

**Michigan Aerobatic Open (Mid-America)**

Saturday, July 9 – Sunday, July 10, 2016  
 Practice/Registration: Wednesday, July 8  
 Rain/Weather: Sunday, July 10  
 Power: Primary through Unlimited  
 Location: Bay City James Clements Municipal Airport (3CM): Bay City, Michigan  
 Region: Mid-America  
 Contest Director: Brian Roodvoets  
 Phone: (810) 338-7654  
 E-Mail: [redfoot@chartermi.net](mailto:redfoot@chartermi.net)  
 Website: [iac88.eaachapter.org](http://iac88.eaachapter.org)

**East Coast Open Championship (Southeast)**

Friday, August 12 – Saturday, August 13, 2016  
 Practice/Registration: Wed., August 10 – Thurs., August 11  
 Rain/Weather: Sunday, August 14  
 Power: Primary through Unlimited  
 Location: Everett-Stewart Regional Airport (UCY): Union City, TN  
 Region: Southeast  
 Contest Director: Mike Rinker  
 Phone: (731) 796-0849  
 E-Mail: [mdr@vaughnelectric.com](mailto:mdr@vaughnelectric.com)  
 Website: [www.iac27.org](http://www.iac27.org)

**Ace's High Aerobatic Contest (South Central)**

Saturday, September 10 – Sunday, September 11, 2016  
 Practice/Registration: Friday, September 9  
 Power: Primary through Unlimited  
 Location: Newton City (EWK): Newton, KS  
 Region: South Central  
 Contest Director: Ross Schoneboom  
 Phone: (316) 519-2079  
 Alternate Phone: (316) 648-5057  
 E-Mail: [schoneboomr@prodigy.net](mailto:schoneboomr@prodigy.net)

**Rocky Mountain "Oyster" Invitational Aerobatic Contest (South Central)**

Saturday, October 8 – Sunday, October 9, 2016  
 Practice/Registration: Friday, October 7  
 Glider Categories: Sportsman through Unlimited  
 Power: Primary through Unlimited  
 Location: Lamar (KLAA): Lamar, CO  
 Region: South Central  
 Contest Director: Jamie S. Treat  
 Phone: (303) 304-7937  
 Alternate Phone: (303) 648-0130  
 E-Mail: [jamietreat@q.com](mailto:jamietreat@q.com)  
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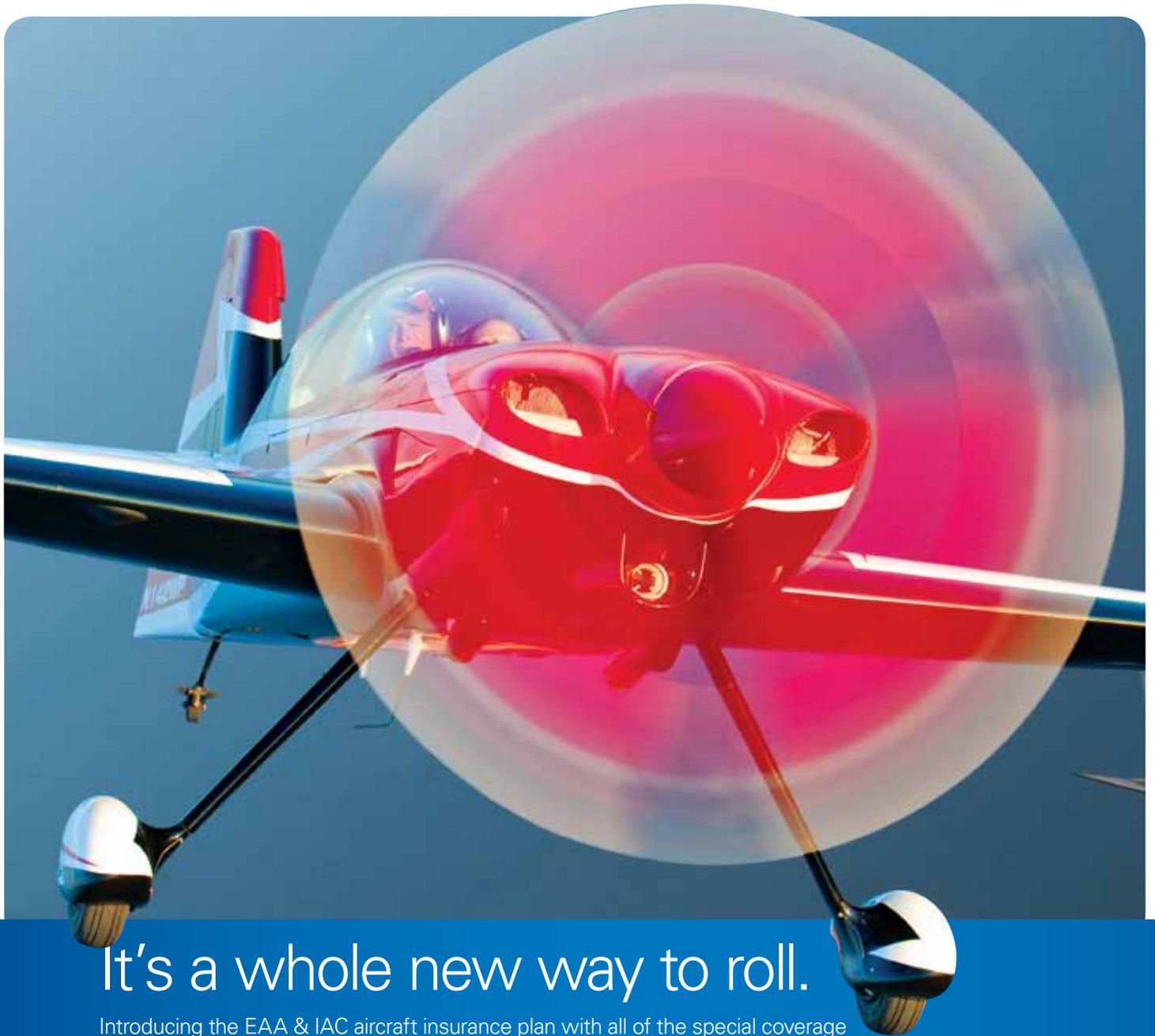


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