

# SPORT *Aerobatics*

DECEMBER 2020

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL AEROBATIC CLUB



- ▶ IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A PITTS
- ▶ A PASSION FOR AEROBATICS

## Verne Jobst

2020 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE



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## COVER

**ON THE COVER:** 2020 Hall of Fame inductee Verne Jobst. Photos courtesy of EAA Archives and IAC Archives.

**ABOVE:** May of 1987, Verne Jobst flies the *Spirit of St. Louis* over Paris. Photo courtesy of EAA Archives.

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# Internal Growth and Outward Change

BY JIM BOURKE, IAC 434151

## HOW TO GROW A CHAPTER

**I'M ASKED QUITE** often by chapter leaders how to get members to become more involved, and I'm asked by contest directors how to get people to show up to contests. I'm glad to help with these questions. The IAC did not become what it is without people working very hard to grow it, and we can never stop working if we want to build on what our past leaders gave us.

The basic formula for growing enthusiasm is conceptually simple yet still challenging to implement, because it requires adhering to what is for most people an unnaturally positive frame of mind.

The first step is to remember that the sport is just as exciting now as it was when you started. If you are new to aerobatics, that's easy, but a lot of chapter leaders have been doing this awhile, and they can forget how much fun it is. So, if that describes you, think back to what you felt the first time you flew a loop. No matter how long ago that was, I promise you that people haven't changed since then! Aviation isn't quite as present in the media as it once was, but when we show airplanes to people, they like what they see. You can trust people to respond positively.

This means that it isn't your job to solve everyone else's problems finding the money and time the sport requires. Instead, show them how fun it is to fly aerobatics and let them solve those problems on their own, the same way you did when you felt the first rush of enthusiasm.

The art of building excitement for something is called "marketing," which I've put in quotes just to remind you that a lot of people have already studied how to do this, and they are very, very good at it. They are so good at it that people make important decisions all the time about what car (or airplane) to buy, who to vote for, where is the best place to live, and which dentist to go to without even realizing that they've been swayed by successful marketing. So, don't try to reinvent the wheel. Read a book instead, or pay attention to what makes others successful.

The most successful IAC chapters have leaders who love the sport and who love sharing their passion. They build genuine relationships through regular social contact. They exude powerful positive energy that everyone wants to be around. They don't waste one second wishing that more people would come to their next contest; they make it a sure thing by engaging with every possible attendee on social media, in email, and on the phone.

It might seem obvious, but one of the tricks to getting what you want from people is to tell them what you want. We tend to build relationships without speaking directly, but it works surprisingly well to just plainly say what you are looking for. So, if you want your chapter to grow, you can start the process by just mentioning that to everyone you meet.

Notice I did not say you should complain about a lack of growth or that you should waste time blaming someone else for a lack of growth. I'm saying you should talk about your goal in a positive manner. Successful chapter leaders do not hold grudges; they are too busy enjoying everyone for who they are. They do not complain; they are too busy finding solutions to problems.



As I alluded above, in a sense this is not very complicated, but that doesn't mean it is easy!

## A POSSIBLE CHANGE TO SPORT AEROBATICS

Last month I talked a bit about the IAC's budget shortfall. This month I want to give everyone a heads-up that the publication schedule for *Sport Aerobatics* may be changing. After reviewing our expenses with our treasurer, Jordan Ashley, I will be asking the board to move the magazine to a six issue per year publication schedule in 2021. This will accomplish two things: 1) it will save us a great deal of money, nearly \$50,000; and 2) it will allow us to free up resources that can be better applied to online communication.

I understand that the monthly arrival of *Sport Aerobatics* is welcomed by everyone, including me, but print magazines are simply expensive compared to digital formats. Regardless of what the board decides, we will not cut back on the amount of content we produce; we may just deliver it to you in a more cost-effective way through electronic means.

I would normally want to wait to tell you about this once I know for sure what we are going to do, but due to the deadline for my column and the timing of the decision at the fall board meeting in mid-November, this might be the only opportunity I have to get the word out before the change takes place. More on this later, naturally.

Before I leave this subject, what are you doing with your old *Sport Aerobatics* magazines? I hope you are leaving them in conspicuous places, like FBOs, doctors' offices, and at the DMV. Keep telling people about the fun you have flying aerobatics, and keep flying.

I am always available at [president@iac.org](mailto:president@iac.org). **IAC!**

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



# Your Passion and Dedication Inspire Others

BY LORRIE PENNER, IAC 431036

**WE ALL HAVE THE CAPACITY TO INSPIRE AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS. SHARE YOUR AEROBATIC EXPERIENCE WITH SOMEONE TODAY. YOU NEVER KNOW, IT MIGHT BE WHAT THEY NEEDED TO HEAR.**

► **SUBMISSIONS:** Photos, articles, news, and letters to the editor intended for publication should be emailed to [editor@iac.org](mailto:editor@iac.org). Please include your IAC number, city, and state/country. Letters should be concise, polite, and to the point. All letters are subject to editing for clarity and length.

**MANY PEOPLE HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT** contributions to the sport and art of aerobatic flight. Some have dedicated their lives to aerobatics. In this issue you will read about a number of our IAC members who have devoted themselves to the sport of aerobatics or inspired and encouraged others through their actions.

IAC historian Mike Heuer writes about longtime friend and our current IAC Hall of Fame recipient, Verne Jobst. Throughout the article we see a picture painted of a man with boundless energy and relentless devotion to the IAC and its success. “You couldn’t help but be infected by his dedication,” Mike said. Besides being the longest-serving IAC president, Verne created the IAC Achievement Awards program based on his experience with the Soaring Society of America’s soaring badges. Since 1971, thousands of pilots have qualified for the awards.

In the Lines and Angles “Full Circle” article by Justin Bethune, we see a “phenomenal beacon and representative for sport aerobatics” in Susan Bell. Because she is an active advocate through in-person seminars and online webinars, Justin was able to find his path into aerobatics. Susan’s “Zero to Hero” webinar captured his attention. Once he heard more about her story, he started to do additional research about how to get into aerobatics. He felt a bit lost, but a few weeks later Susan was making a presentation at the Alameda Aero Club, and he jumped at the opportunity to meet her in person. That meeting was the catalyst to get him started in aerobatic training.

A project to completely refresh and modernize his Extra 300 mid-wing gave Maciej Rogozinski the opportunity to build incredible friendships with aerobatic pilots around the world. His new aerobatic friends have been very generous with a wealth of information and provided him with some remarkable flying experiences. Among others, Maciej thanks Michael Bellenir of Empire Aerosport who worked with him throughout the project on all the mechanical and technical aspects, Doug Vayda of Southeast Aero for giving him his first opportunity to fly an Extra, and Dagmar Kress of Metropolitan State University of Denver for introducing him to aerobatic flight over 20 years ago.

The IAC 50th Anniversary Spotlight is dedicated to women who have left their mark on aerobatics and the IAC. From the first owner of a Pitts Special, to the first American ever to win a gold medal in a World Aerobatic Championships, to the first person to win the world championship title at two consecutive world events, to the first female IAC president, these ladies’ achievements influence many who aspire to follow in their footsteps.

Inspiration can come in a variety of packages, whether it is a kick in the pants to take action or advice on where to look or who to contact, we all have the capacity to inspire and encourage others. Share your aerobatic experience with someone today. You never know, it might be what they needed to hear. **IAC!**

▶ **TOP STORY**

# Full Circle

BY JUSTIN BETHUNE, IAC 440532

I FIRST HEARD ABOUT SUSAN BELL IAC 438132 and her aerobatic history back in the fall of 2019. I saw a post featuring her 2019 U.S. National Sportsman Aerobatic Championship on IAC/EAA (Facebook and Instagram) social media channels. Her “Zero to Hero” webinar captured my attention, especially with her original roots of learning how to fly, starting in Oakland, California. I’m originally from Oakland but learned to fly at Hayward Executive Airport, another San Francisco Bay Area airport situated just 6 nm south of Oakland.

Once I read more about her story, I started to do more research about how to get involved in aerobatics but still felt a bit lost. I considered doing an introductory aerobatic course but didn’t know where to go or who to do it with. Luckily, a few weeks after reading about Susan online, I learned that she was planning to host a presentation at the Alameda Aero Club at the Oakland airport to talk more about her journey into aerobatics. I jumped at the opportunity to go and meet her in person.

Her presentation was super insightful, and it helped me see a path to get into aerobatics. I’m not sure if she remembers this, but I talked with her briefly at that event. I told her that I was thinking about attending an upset recovery/spin training/introduction to aerobatics course with Patty Wagstaff at her school in St. Augustine, Florida. Susan *insisted* that I do it and that it would be an excellent program. That night I went online, joined the IAC, and confirmed my spot in the 10-Hour Airmanship and Aerobatics Course with Patty Wagstaff. I completed the course in October 2019. I also attended Susan’s virtual webinar this past summer when I needed an extra kick of motivation in the middle of quarantine.



Fast-forward to the start of 2020, I was hoping to dive into competition, but as we know now, COVID-19 put a stop to many general aviation activities. Seeing all of the contests being canceled was a real bummer. However, I kept doing some light aerobatic training out of my home airport. Once I was informed that Akrofest would happen via Instagram, I promised myself I had to be there.

I was more than delighted to see Susan at Akrofest. It was powerful because it all came full circle for me. From being initially inspired by Susan’s story to competing in my first contest, I spent much time and energy trying to get to that place, and it was humbling. As a person of color, it’s important to have advocates and people who inspire you, and Susan has been a phenomenal beacon and representative for sport aerobatics. During Akrofest, I experienced and spent time with amazing people who were so welcoming and encouraging. Despite all that has happened this year, I’m happy to close out the year and season with my aerobatic adventure at Akrofest. This was a pivotal moment because I’ve found my purpose within aviation, and next year I’m giving it my all.

# IAC LEGAL COUNSEL APPOINTED

**CRAIG FITZGERALD**, IAC 437032, has been appointed as legal counsel for the International Aerobatic Club. As legal counsel for the IAC, the person who fills this position is an attorney available to do work on a pro-bono basis. From time to time the IAC may seek counsel on an as-needed basis on day-to-day matters. Other detailed work requiring courtroom activity and tax matters is usually coordinated through EAA's legal counsel.

Craig is an attorney, IAC member, and active aerobatic competitor and judge. He is a 1992 graduate of Vanderbilt University School of Law, and he has been in practice for nearly 28 years. His practice generally involves representing large



corporate clients across the country on complex matters.

Through competitions and other events, Craig has come to know several current board members and is confident

he will build a good working relationship with those members who he does not yet know as well. Please extend your thanks to Craig on his volunteerism if the opportunity presents itself.



# IAC Board Notes

## SEPTEMBER 21 TELECONFERENCE

**A SPECIAL MEETING** of the board of directors was called on Monday, September 21, 2020. A number of items were brought up on the teleconference including questions pertaining to the limited contest season due to COVID-19.

Some questions and issues specific to the contest season that were discussed by the board on this call included:

- **Rule change proposal process.** It was decided that the regular process will proceed forward. Proposals are being accepted through November 11. Members must submit their comments to this email address: [ruleschair@iac.org](mailto:ruleschair@iac.org).

- **Interruption of award criteria.** With the limited number of contests being held, should the Regional Series, L. Paul Soucy, and Annual Nonflying Awards be presented? A majority of the board voted that the IAC would not issue these awards for the 2020 flying season.

Other topics carried forward and added to the agenda will be covered at the fall board meeting on Saturday, November 14, 2020. Agenda documents can be found on the IAC website at [www.IAC.org/meeting-docs](http://www.IAC.org/meeting-docs). Member login is required. **IAC+**

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# ENERGY AND RELENTLESS DEVOTION TO THE IAC

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## 2019 International Aerobatics Hall of Fame Inductee Verne Jobst

STORY BY MIKE HEUER, IAC 4, IAC HISTORIAN

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF EAA AND IAC ARCHIVES

**I**n normal times, articles on the current inductee into the IAC's International Aerobatics Hall of Fame appear after that person's induction into the hall in November each year. The ceremonies and dinner are highlights of sport aviation's calendar and take place in the Founders' Wing of the EAA Aviation Museum in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. As an inductee into the Hall of Fame myself, I can tell you with certainty it is also one of the most meaningful and emotional experiences of anyone who is so honored. However, this year the article appears before the inductee is formally honored in Oshkosh because of the pandemic.

The criteria for this award are outlined in IAC's policy manual as follows: "The International Aerobatic Club created an International Aerobatics Hall of Fame in 1986 to honor persons who have made a significant contribution to aerobatics. The Hall of Fame Program is to be international in nature."

The 2019 inductee to our Hall of Fame is Verne Jobst of McHenry, Illinois. In a nutshell, Verne Jobst was one of IAC's longest-serving presidents, holding office from 1973 to 1978. He succeeded Bob Heuer, our first president, and was followed by Carl Bury of Hudson, Ohio. At that time, the IAC was set on a rapid growth path, and this was encouraged, enhanced, and made possible by Verne's energy and relentless devotion to the IAC and our sport. He loved the club, what it represented, the people in it. They loved him as well.

But let me take you back a bit for some background. Our family became "all in" for aerobatics

in the mid-1960s, and my own first contest was in Monroe, Louisiana, in 1968. Our first Nationals was also that year, though I did not compete. My father flew Unlimited in a Ryan ST-A, as I had in what was then Primary category.

Along the way, my father organized one of the first regional contests in the country in 1968 in Aurora, Illinois, which offered prize money and was sponsored by the Old Second National Bank in Aurora. It brought out all the aerobatic luminaries at the time, many of whom flew into our airstrip in northern Illinois for practice just prior to the event.

About the same time, Verne Jobst contacted my father and wanted to come down to the airstrip for some advice and coaching. What seems hard to believe today, considering the pilot skills that Verne displayed so well in subsequent years, is he was having a hard time getting through a loop. His airplane at the time was a "Smith-Pitts," which was a one-of-a-kind hybrid and a cross between the Pitts S-1 and a Smith Miniplane. After watching Verne fly a loop, and consistently snap out of the top of it, my father climbed in the airplane himself and flew a routine for Verne. It was an inspiration and a show-and-tell my father liked so much.

After that, Verne partnered with Bob Davis and Manny Peck to buy one of the first Pitts S-1Ss (N714H) from its first owner on the East Coast. They called it *Tres Hombres*. In subsequent years, Verne went on to fly the airplane up through Advanced and did very well in competition. He was a natural pilot and loved flying. Verne and Bob were part of a list of United Airlines pilots in the Chicago area who became leaders in the IAC. IAC founders Don Taylor, Jim Dees, and Jim Lacey were other UAL pilots in the area.



**Above:** Verne Jobst and Alexander Butterfield, FAA Administrator.



**Left:** Verne Jobst with Bob Heuer, Mike Heuer and Don Taylor.

**Below:** N714H at the Heuer family airstrip, August 1971.



In late 1969, my father and some of the others decided a new aerobatic club was needed in the country, and the term “grassroots aerobatics” was coined during their early discussions. They approached Paul Poberezny, president of EAA, for his support, and Paul agreed. A loose aerobatic division of EAA had been talked about but never formally organized, though Paul had long expressed a worry of further regulation on amateur-built aircraft if they were not flown safely in aerobatics. In fact, a notice of proposed rulemaking had been written proposing aerobatics be prohibited in homebuilts in the 1960s and was squashed thanks to EAA’s efforts. That proposal, if it had become regulation, would have destroyed aerobatics in the United States. Clearly, however, Paul felt more organization and attention to safety was needed. Bob Heuer and his colleagues stepped up to the plate.

This was not noncontroversial at the time, as another aerobatic organization did exist, the Aerobatic Club of America. However, it was small, and its energy was concentrated on organizing the Nationals and sending a team to world championships. Paul, Bob, and the others felt that if aerobatics and competition were ever to really expand, a grassroots effort was needed. They followed EAA’s example with local events and the formation of an impressive chapter network.

In the meantime, and during IAC’s formation activities in early 1970, I made a visit to Verne’s home for a discussion with him and Bob Davis. I liked these guys. They were enthusiastic and willing to listen and respected my views. I was only 20 years old at the time but had a couple of years of competition under my belt and was assisting the IAC’s founders in any way I could with administrative support. I told Verne and Bob what IAC was about, its goals, and why we were forming something from scratch. They both subsequently joined, and Verne became IAC No. 101 and Bob was No. 103.

In the late winter of 1970-1971, I again traveled to Verne Jobst’s home in McHenry, Illinois, to meet with him and Bob Davis to talk about Verne’s idea for an achievement awards program. He had the idea from the badges he had achieved in soaring and thought both contest and noncontest flying proficiency should be rewarded. Taking notes on their ideas, I went home to the office and typewriter and wrote down the rules for the program. It was implemented in May 1971. This idea of Verne’s can be credited in helping aerobatics and contests

expand and to promote pilot proficiency and skill at the same time in both a contest and noncontest environment. Since 1971, thousands of pilots have qualified for the awards.

My father and the other IAC leaders recognized Verne's energy early on and his outgoing and positive personality. In the fall of 1971, my father talked him into taking over the reins of IAC's new publication, *Sport Aerobatics* magazine, which was published for the first time that year. Verne agreed and served as its editor until early 1974. Though rather thin, with 16 pages composing the first issue in October of that year, it was a start and took the IAC from publishing a mimeographed newsletter to a full-fledged magazine with pictures.

In the summer of 1973, my father announced he would not run again for president. Though he was deeply dedicated to IAC's success, the work was getting him down and he wanted to return to more flying and projects in the hangar. He was always a hands-on guy with airplanes and built, restored, and modified several during his life. This announcement led to a scramble at our

annual meeting in Oshkosh, and Verne was talked into serving as president. Much to my surprise, I was nominated to be Verne's vice president and the transition went forward. I had just returned from USAF pilot training in Texas and was fulfilling my active-duty commitment and training in the Air National Guard. I planned to return to school that fall.

Early in 1974, while still enrolled in school, Verne called me on the phone and asked me to take over the magazine. I was reluctant but agreed. At about the same time, Paul Poberezny offered me a job at EAA in Milwaukee, which I accepted. At first, I prepared the magazine at home, in the evenings and on weekends. It was hard to keep up.



**Top:** Verne and Bob Davis

**Bottom:** Verne at IAC board meeting with Shari Jobst, May 1974.

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Eventually, I was permitted to do it on EAA time, and after a few years I turned over the magazine to Steve Morris.

During the time I was vice president, although in my early 20s, I took almost daily calls from Verne, seeking my advice and counsel and keeping me informed as to the latest news and developments. These were the pre-internet days, and phone calls and letters were our only way of communicating. It took up a lot of time, but I appreciated Verne's trust in me. He had talked to me about running for president early on, but that didn't come to pass until 1981.

While Verne was still in office as IAC president and I was employed by EAA, we embarked on one of the most ambitious programs EAA had ever undertaken up to that time. The goal was to build a flyable, safe replica of the *Spirit of St. Louis* and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of its flight across the Atlantic by re-creating the tour in the summer of 1927 to all 48 states. That original tour was meant to promote aviation and its practicality and was sponsored by the Guggenheim Fund for Aeronautics.

The EAA project required sponsors as well, and ultimately it came from Amoco Oil Co. and its public relations firm in St. Louis. My role

was to be public relations director for the tour, and this was daily work once the tour began in New York in June 1977.

Verne ended up logging the most hours and tour stops with the replica *Spirit* during that summer and the 48-state tour it encompassed. Thanks to EAA's extensive chapter network, he was frequently met by EAA chapter leaders and members. My job was to liaise with Verne on an almost daily basis and our phone calls numbered in the dozens. He was a joy to work with. On the

tour, he was accompanied by a Stinson support aircraft with mechanic and pilot. Other pilots on the tour included IACers. Bob Heuer, Bob Davis, and Charlie Hillard were also *Spirit* pilots. Something about aerobatic skills convinced Paul that accomplished aerobatic pilots could handle the difficult-to-fly *Spirit* with its instability and limited visibility. The tour was a huge success, and the replica now rests in the EAA museum in Oshkosh with a diorama of Paris underneath.

One of an IAC president's responsibilities in the early days was to help coordinate the nightly air show in Oshkosh during the fly-in now known as EAA AirVenture Oshkosh. After Verne left the IAC presidency in 1978, he continued this work in Oshkosh with some excellent assistants for 33 years. I saw him every year in Oshkosh, though it would be no exaggeration that he was one of the busiest on site. We kept in touch over the years.

What impressed me most about Verne, when it came to IAC work, was his intense energy. The guy was never tired. As IAC's historian, I have the privilege of holding the club's archives from the early years, and included in those archives are hundreds of carbon copies of letters Verne wrote over the years. What comes through in so many of those letters, much less his phone calls, was his determination to build the IAC and aerobatics in a positive way. You couldn't help but be infected by his dedication.

There is no doubt in my mind that without Verne at the helm during those five years, we would not have seen the explosive growth in the club that we did. His ability to work with EAA leadership was equally impressive, and he was an extraordinarily strong EAA supporter. He realized it was the key to our success, since the vast majority of our new members came from the EAA family.

Aside from the energy, Verne treated this young man with respect and listened to my views and advice. Other IAC founders were that way as well, and it helped launch me on a 50-plus-year career in aerobatics. Young people need mentors, guidance, people to look up to and admire, but also to be treated as adults. This was my experience, and it helped form my life.

Thus, Verne Jobst's induction into the International Aerobatics Hall of Fame is meaningful to me not only because of an incredible résumé and a list of his accomplishments, though many. It is important to me, and countless others, because of Verne Jobst, the man. I look forward to honoring him when the induction ceremonies eventually take place. Every IACer today owes him a debt of gratitude. **IAC+**



**Above:** Verne standing in front of the *Spirit of St. Louis*.



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Preproduction, computer-generated image shown. Available late 2020. Always consult the owner's manual before off-road driving, know your terrain and trail difficulty, and use appropriate safety gear.



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# IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A PITTS

STORY BY BUDD DAVISSON, IAC 435420  
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF IAC ARCHIVES

**N**ot everyone in the world needs a Pitts. In fact, to be honest, a lot of people probably shouldn't have a Pitts. However, that doesn't mean there aren't aerobatic airplanes out there that will suit their needs perfectly. That statement, however, begs the question, "Exactly what are a person's aerobatic needs? How do you define them?"

Almost as soon as people get the acro bug and they start looking at aerobatic airplanes, reality often intrudes and changes their direction. For instance: Does a person actually "need" an aerobatic airplane? For the vast majority of pilots, the answer is no. As far as that goes, there are very few of us who actually *need* an airplane of any kind. So, right up front we have to recognize that in buying an aerobatic airplane — or at least an airplane capable of doing aerobatics — we're doing something irrational and hard to justify. Superficially, our enthusiasm for the quest enables us to ignore that bit of logic, but deep inside, we know the truth: We're about to take money and time that might not be ours. That assumes we're neither single nor retired and living in a barn on an airstrip. It assumes that, like most people, we have a spouse. Maybe a

family. And maybe even a job! So that time and money isn't entirely ours. The rest of the family has to be considered and, ideally, be part of the acro decision equation. If we burst in the door shouting, "Honey, you'll never guess what I just bought ... a single-hole Pitts!" That one's really hard to rationalize to our significant other.

If we're going to spend lots of hours at the airport, it'll help our life a lot if we just perform a few relationship functions before pulling the trigger:

Make the rest of the family part of the decision.

Think about getting an airplane that lets you do acro but also performs a family travel function.

View the financial aspect with the family in mind: Is the money involved going to hurt any of their activities or desires? Junking the family vacation in favor of pulling g's is probably not going to go over well.

View the time involved the same way: Are you going to miss any of little Johnny's softball games or Jennifer's school plays? There is no such thing as "free" time. It comes from somewhere.

Work all the family stuff out first, and acro bird ownership will go much smoother.

# PICKING THE AIRPLANE

There are a number of personal decisions that will drive the decision as to which airplane to purchase.

## **Serious aerobatics or just nibbling around the edges?**

Exactly what kinds of acro do you see yourself doing? All inside or balanced between inside and outside? That decision not only determines the strength and capabilities of the airplane, but also whether both the airframe and the engine are going to have negative *g* capabilities.

## **Competition or fun?**

If you're going to compete, you're going to have to do some traveling. The category in which you're planning on competing really narrows the which-airplane decision.

## **Single-place versus two-place?**

Having one or two seats often determines the size, and usually the cost, of an airplane, Pitts or otherwise.

## **Semi-practical or single-purpose?**

Something like a Citabria or Decathlon is very much a multipurpose airplane. You can compete in it (to a certain extent), but it's also a practical go-somewhere airplane. The same cannot be said of an Acro Sport I or Skybolt.

## **Affordable or ridiculously fun and expensive?**

Your financial capabilities will answer that question; however, just because you have an Extra 330 in the stable doesn't mean you have to compete or strive for the consecutive-outside-loop record. By the same token, airplanes like clipped Cubs are a huge amount of fun for far fewer dollars.

## **Cheap to support or expensive (hangar, maintenance, etc.)?**

You can leave your Cessna Aerobat parked out on the ramp. You won't want to do that with your Extra or Acro Sport II.

## **Certified or homebuilt?**

The list of homebuilt airplanes capable of doing aerobatics is as long, or longer, than the list of factory-built birds capable of twisting their tails. However, homebuilt airplanes are structural unknowns, so they need careful inspection.

## **Antique or Modern?**

There a number of 1930s biplanes that are still viable and fun aerobatic airplanes, although you can't compete in Intermediate or above in them because of their lack of vertical performance. Plus, age makes the inspections more necessary. Even airplanes can wear out.

# THE LIST IS LONG AND COMPLICATED

What follows is a list that is far from complete, because there is no existing list that contains all the airplanes that are legally capable of doing aerobatics. What follows are the airplanes that border on being fairly common and ignore some of the aerobatic specials that the acro in-group knows exist but the rest of us may never get to fly. This includes airplanes like the old Staudachers, the unreal MX2 clan, Extras, Sukhois, etc.



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**CLIPPED WING CUB**



## HOMEBUILT ACRO BIRDS

### ▶ Acroduster Too

The Acroduster Too is a scaled-down, beefed-up version of the Starduster Too. It's designed specifically for aerobatics, where the Starduster Too is not. Both came from Lou Stolp.

### Acroduster One

The Acroduster One departs from the Too in that it has an all-aluminum fuselage and tail. It was designed specifically to compete with the Pitts, and it comes close. Early on there was at least one tail failure in hard acro.

### ▶ Acro Sport

The original Poberezny-designed Acro Sport was an effort to give the homebuilder a full aerobatic airplane that was easier to build and fly than a single-place Pitts. It's good for bigger pilots. It easily meets Poberezny's design goals.

### ▶ Acro Sport II

An expansion on the Acro Sport I, it is a good two-place airplane but is happiest with 180 hp. Bone-simple to build, there are lots of them out there and it has a good reputation.

### ▶ Cassutt

The Cassutt was actually designed as a racer and is one of the simplest to build airplanes on the planet. It does decent inside acro, but that's not its forte.

### ▶ Christen Eagle

The Christen Eagle is, for all intents and purposes, a Pitts S-2A. It has the same aerodynamics and power, but is cleaner and wider so it is faster and more comfortable. Kept light and with the right pilot, it'll go through Intermediate.

### ▶ Giles 100/200

A carbon-fiber and glass rocket ship, both airplanes (one- and two-place) have what is probably the fastest roll rate in the market, along with very light controls. This one will go through Advanced and close in on Unlimited.

### ▶ HyperBipe

Doing acro in a two-place, side-by-side cabin biplane may sound a little weird, but it's actually a pretty good acro bird and a terrific cross-country machine. It'll do nearly everything a Pitts S-2A will do. It's a very simple airplane to land, with good over-the-nose visibility.

### ▶ Laser 200

Leo Loudenslager tied down a bunch of national and international championships in his modified Stephens Akro. It's so modified, it's now called a Laser and is a poor man's four-cylinder Extra. The 24-foot, one-piece wing, however, takes a bit of building. It's easily Advanced-category capable, bordering on Unlimited, and easy to land.

### ▶ Midget Mustang

Another racer turned sport airplane, the MM-1 is good for inside, fun acro. It's also easy to land and is a good-looking, all-aluminum airplane.

### ▶ Miniplane

The leader of the 1950s crop of homebuilt biplanes, a lot have been built and modified for acro. In stock form, it's good for inside, fun-type acro on a budget.

### ▶ One Design

A professional design by Dan Rihn, it is capable of Advanced-category work. Its wing is another wooden wonder that takes time to build, but there is at least one specialist out there building them.

### ▶ RV

There are over 10,000 RVs flying and, although Van's Aircraft never intended them for aerobatics, they actually do good inside acro but are aerodynamically clean, so easy to get going faster than recommended. There are instructors out there who specialize in RV acro, and it's a good investment.

### ▶ Starduster Too

The two-place version of the earlier Starduster One, Lou Stolp never intended it for aerobatics but eventually beefed up the tail, which was apparently a weak point. It's good for limited inside acro as long as the speeds and weights are kept down.

### ▶ Steen Skybolt

The Skybolt duplicates Pitts' aerodynamics in a bigger airframe: a 24-foot span versus 20-foot on the S-2s. It's designed specifically for bigger pilots, but its size and weight might keep it from being competitive in Intermediate. It'll do everything an S-2A will, but it needs horsepower – an O-540 is recommended.

## CERTIFIED/ FACTORY-BUILT

### ▶ Aerobat

You want basic aerobatics? The Cessna C-150 Aerobat is about as basic as you can get. It's a good trainer because its low power means you have to get good at energy management. Plus, you can take up your significant other.

### ▶ Bonanza

Beechcraft built about 135 F33C straight-tail Bonanzas that are certified for aerobatics. They don't have an inverted system so they're limited to inside work, but between aerobatic outings, it can carry the entire family to grandma's house.

### ▶ Clipped Cub

Whacking 40-1/2 inches off each wing root makes the J-3 a legal aerobatic airplane. Kept light and equipped with a C90 and no electrics, and you have a tremendously fun, economical, inside aerobatic airplane that'll work in Primary and is good for watching autumn sunsets, too.

## TO BE HONEST, A LOT OF PEOPLE PROBABLY SHOULDN'T HAVE A PITTS.

### ► Chipmunk

There is enough of this UK/Canadian monoplane design available to include it on the list. With the stock 145-hp engine, they're a little puny but you'll never fly a smoother, more pleasant airplane.

### ► Citabria, etc

The old Aeronca Champ lives on in American Champion's Citabria/Decathlon line. The original 115-hp 7ECA "Citabricks" blazed the way for better and better versions. A 160-hp Citabria is a wonderful dual-purpose machine, as long as you're doing mostly inside maneuvers and taking only one passenger with you. The Decathlon, with its symmetrical airfoil and bigger engines, lets you go outside and although its controls appear heavy to a Pitts pilot, they're actually not bad. The new Extreme's bigger engine does wonders for its performance. The wood-spar early wings are okay, but only when a very detailed inspection is done.

### ► Great Lakes

There are two vintages of Great Lakes: the 1930s, and the later ones that start in the '70s. It's available with two or four ailerons. But, it's a dirty, old, antique biplane, which means it'll do all you ask of it but won't go vertical very well. It is still in production.

### ► Jungmann

Most of the Bücker Jungmanns in the country today are Spanish-built CASAs, but there are a few Czechs and Swiss versions as well. It's a dainty, very light, very pleasant-flying airplane. Most are re-engined with Lycomings, which helps.

### ► Jungmeister

An absolute legend, the Bücker Jungmeister is NOT a single-hole version of the Jungmann. It flies very differently and tops the "favorite airplane" list of a lot of pilots because its controls are so wonderful. It also invented snap-rolls; it does them so easy and clean it feels like you're cheating. The airplane is rare enough that it probably shouldn't be on this list, but no aerobatic list is complete without a 'Meister.

### ► SF.260

The SIAI-Marchetti SF.260 is the perfect combination of private fighter and 3-1/2-people cross-country machine. Originally envisioned as a military trainer, it does jetlike aerobatics, meaning it loses very little energy when the nose is pulled up. A few have inverted systems, but most don't. It's a terrific, multipurpose airplane!

### ► Waco

There were, and are, a bewildering number of Wacos built. The three-place YMF is still in production, and the antique F-2 series and RNF birds are decent inside, fun aerobatic mounts, but forget about vertical performance.

### ► Yaks

There is a wide series of Yaks built, all of them aerobatic to one degree or another. The older 50 is a single-place, tail-dragging, almost Unlimited competition aerobatic machine, as is the more modern 55. The 52 is a two-place tandem, tri-gear, militaryesque trainer that is not competition-quality but is good for inside acro. The 52TD is a tailwheel version of the 52, and the 18T is an older, four-place tri-gear. The best part of all of them is that they are powered by the Vedeneyev M-14P round engine.

### ► Zlin

The two-place tandem Czech Zlin 526 was the airplane to beat in the '60s. Today it's fairly rare, although the nose gear Zlin 42 (inline engine) and 242 (flat Lycoming) side-by-side trainers are in the country in some numbers. They're designed to be trainers, not competition machines, but would probably do well in Primary and Sportsman.

Yes, we know — we missed your favorite, but we're out of room. Sorry. Drop us a note and let us know what we should have included. **IACF**



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# A Passion for Aerobatics

Extra 300 Mid-Wing

BY MACIEJ ROGOZINSKI, IAC 438074

**MY FAMILY CAME** to the United States in 1990 with only a few hundred dollars, emigrating from Poland. I vividly recall how diligently my parents worked throughout my childhood to allow our family to survive in this amazing country. I capitalized on every opportunity I could to convince my parents to buy me books and magazines about aviation. Occasionally, I was even successful in convincing them to use their limited resources to purchase model airplanes. I was extraordinarily lucky to have such supportive parents.

When I was 9 years old, my mother asked me, “If you could do or experience anything, what would it be?” I responded quite quickly and enthusiastically, “I wish I could fly a plane!” After that, my mother regularly saved a small portion of her paycheck every week to eventually give me the opportunity to experience flight.

About a year later, she surprised me with the opportunity to take a flight lesson out of Teterboro in a Cessna 152. I was able to get a few lessons before depleting the savings that my parents had accumulated. Later, while on a family vacation in Fort Lauderdale, my mother saw a pamphlet at the hotel with a beautiful Pitts on it. She knew it had the potential to be the memory of a lifetime. I experienced

aerobatics for the first time that day with Dagmar Kress. My life and dreams rolled upside-down with the Pitts. Those dreams would then revolve around aviation.

As I grew older, I accumulated a series of adrenaline-filled hobbies, including motorcycles, formula cars, and prototype cars. These hobbies turned into a business. I finally had the means to get back into aviation and get my private pilot certificate. I spent about a year and a half flying a variety of airplanes and purchased a Diamond. Quickly becoming bored by straight and level flight and just traveling to random destinations, I realized the only thing that could feed my insatiable need for adventure would be an aerobatic plane.

My objective was, and continues to be, to learn all of the fundamental skills required to be proficient and competitive someday by getting training in a variety of aerobatic planes. I wanted to make sure that the airplane I’d purchase for myself would be one that I could use for my journey from Sportsman to Advanced. Researching airplanes, I considered a variety of things, including historical reliability, safety record, operating costs, performance, support network, parts availability, and training opportunities.

**Right, From Top to Bottom:**

Maciej with Dagmar in her Pitts S-2.

Maciej and his mother stand next to a Cessna 152.

Every single piece of hardware in the entire airplane was refreshed.

Where it all began.

The instrument panel was redesigned with modern avionics and materials.



After extensive conversations with a handful of pilots, common themes became clear. What is your goal? Are you flying for fun or for competition? Is winning at a certain level important? Knowing that my ambitions revolved around the idea of eventually winning at the Advanced level, the recommendations were all very similar from each pilot: Buy the best airplane you can afford, and train. There is no substitute for time in the seat and getting coaching.

There was a wide variety of machines I could choose from, and the Extra 300 checked off every single one of my requirements. The performance of Extras is unmistakable, the support network and parts availability mean minimal downtime, and based on the platform's popularity worldwide, training opportunities are plentiful. In my search, I came across one particular example that caught my eye. No matter what other airplanes I looked at, I kept going back to look at this listing again. And again. That plane was a mid-wing Extra 300, located at Southeast Aero. I sent an email over to Southeast Aero asking about it, and the wheels were set in motion.

I was pleasantly surprised to hear from an enthusiastic Doug Vayda just a few hours later. One of the most incredible aspects of the aerobatics community is that from the moment you start chatting with someone, it feels like you're talking to a lifelong friend. Even though it was the first time I had ever spoken with Doug, he spent over an hour chatting with me to learn about my experience level, ambitions, and expectations. Doug asked me a question: "Maciej, you're obsessed about getting into aerobatics; have you had a chance to fly an Extra?" I had not, and I admitted that to him. Doug quickly replied, "Before we start talking about you buying one, how about you fly your Diamond down here to St. Augustine, and I'll get you some seat time in one so that way we can make sure that it's right for you."

I'm a particularly impatient breed of human that thrives on the idea of spontaneity and adventure. Roughly 12 hours later, I was preflighting my Diamond in northern New Jersey, preparing to fly it to St. Augustine. Doug was shocked when I sent him a text at around 9 a.m. that morning, letting him know that I was already on my way south. I don't think he's accustomed to people in their right minds dropping everything and flying in to experience an Extra for the first time. Luckily for me, Doug was extraordinarily accommodating, even though he was actually in Germany at the time. He coordinated everything from across the ocean, so that once I arrived in St. Augustine, I would be able to hop into the Extra.

Flying all the way to St. Augustine was quite adventurous. The last 100 miles was filled with the midafternoon thunderstorms that are all too common in Florida. In the last 10 nm from St. Augustine, the storms were closing in from everywhere. I landed safely and taxied over to Southeast Aero to meet Allan Moore, chief instructor at Patty Wagstaff's Aviation Safety Aerobatic School. Allan would be giving me my first experience in an Extra. We talked for two hours, waiting for the weather to clear. Since I had essentially no aerobatic instruction, it was a good opportunity to do some ground school.

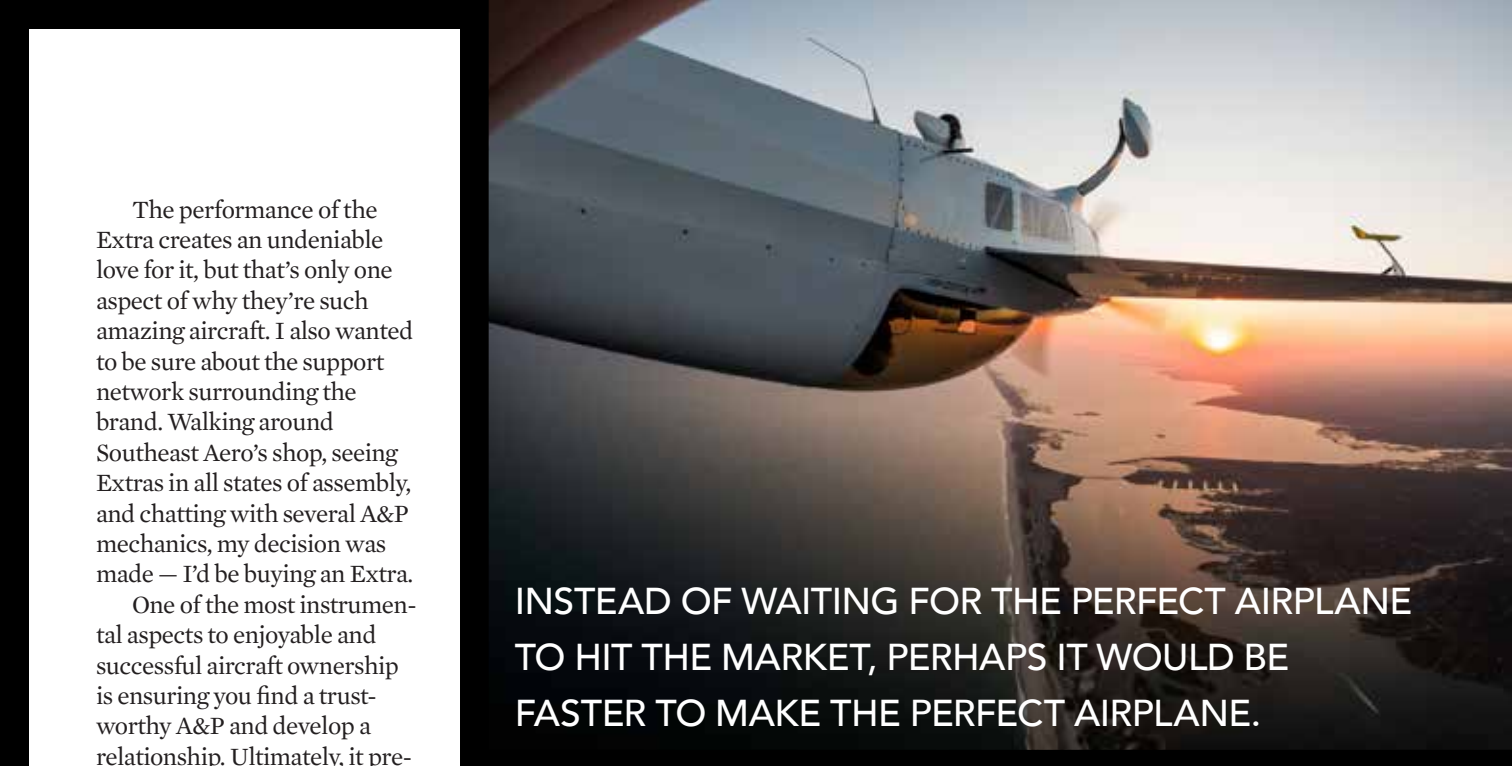
Finally, the weather cleared up. We quickly strapped into the Extra 330LX. The moment the throttle hit the forward stop; I knew the Extra would be everything I had dreamed of. The flight would end up being one of the most amazing memories I'll cherish for the rest of my life.

The performance of the Extra creates an undeniable love for it, but that's only one aspect of why they're such amazing aircraft. I also wanted to be sure about the support network surrounding the brand. Walking around Southeast Aero's shop, seeing Extras in all states of assembly, and chatting with several A&P mechanics, my decision was made — I'd be buying an Extra.

One of the most instrumental aspects to enjoyable and successful aircraft ownership is ensuring you find a trustworthy A&P and develop a relationship. Ultimately, it prevents you from purchasing a machine that can lead to financial horrors, and good maintenance is integral to your safety. I started flying with an aerobatic instructor who also happened to be a trustworthy A&P with considerable experience working on Extras, Michael Bellenir of Empire Aerosport. After lengthy conversations about what I wanted, my plans for aerobatics, and my budget, we established the criteria for candidate Extras and the search began.

We searched for months, reviewing several potential Extra 300s and 300Ls. Many Extras came and went from the market, but none of them quite fit my required combination of price, wear and tear, and upcoming maintenance needs. The airplane that was "just right" just wasn't coming along. Knowing my ambition was to keep and fly my airplane for a long time, Michael suggested a different approach. Instead of waiting for the perfect airplane to hit the market, perhaps it would be faster to make the perfect airplane. We could search for a machine that was approaching the need for significant work or perhaps find a project that someone was willing to part with. That would give me the combination of lower purchase price, a fresh flying machine, and the opportunity to make customizations to really make it my own. We would have to exchange some time for the perfect combination of things I needed, but it was clearly going to take a long time for just the right airplane to be for sale anyway.

As luck may have it, shortly after that conversation a shop on the West Coast called to say it had heard through the grapevine that I was interested in purchasing a project Extra. It just happened to be in possession of what I could only describe as the epitome of what I was looking for. A mid-wing Extra 300 was in the process of a rebuild. The airframe had a total time of roughly 600 hours, the engine had just been overhauled and was high compression at 10.5-to-1, the propeller had roughly 50 hours on it, and it had been freshly repainted white. The plane was tantamount to a blank canvas; it would be the perfect project that Michael and I were looking for.



**INSTEAD OF WAITING FOR THE PERFECT AIRPLANE TO HIT THE MARKET, PERHAPS IT WOULD BE FASTER TO MAKE THE PERFECT AIRPLANE.**

After having the airplane shipped, Michael pointed out we had a truly unique opportunity to modernize it and transform it to what a mid-wing Extra 300 would be if it were manufactured today. So that's what we did — refreshing every single piece of hardware in the entire airplane, redesigning the instrument panel with modern avionics and materials, a custom interior, and all the little things that have improved in the last 20 years, like LED wingtip lights, camera mounts, and custom graphics to make the airplane my own.

To modernize the panel and lighten up the airplane, we created an all-new panel layout in AutoCAD. Michael designed a layout that is simple, intuitive, and minimalistic; it draws inspiration from the classic panel layout of the Pitts, but was CNC milled out of carbon fiber. For the data needed to fly cross-country, the center of the panel was reserved for a fixed iPad Mini mount, which also serves as the sequence card holder when flying aerobatics. A single modern radio and compact transponder replaced multiple old boxy radios, completely eliminating the slightly awkward lower instrument panel. Multiple engine instruments were consolidated into a single display using a JPI EDM830, making engine scans quick and easy.

With my background in motorsports, combined with Michael's vision to make a "modern mid-wing," it was a foregone conclusion that there would be places to put new materials like carbon fiber. I fabricated the front panel from carbon fiber, and the seats were another opportunity to modernize. There isn't much in the sense of an interior of any aerobatic airplane; simply put, if it doesn't need it, then it isn't there. But the seat upholstery provided another opportunity to put my spin on the appearance of the airplane. I had the seats reupholstered in a black Alcantara, a suedelike microfiber material known for its durability, with a contrasting highlighter yellow stitched diamond pattern bringing some needed color contrast to the cockpit.

Final modernizing touches included replacing the old incandescent position and anti-collision lights with newer and much lighter and brighter Whelen MicroBurst LED nav lights.

The last aspect of personalizing my airplane is generally everyone's favorite, the exterior. The entire fuselage is freshly painted white, a literal blank canvas for a paint scheme. I wanted to do something simple, something elegant in its simplicity. For the foreseeable future, the fuselage will remain primarily white, with simple black accents that subtly emphasize the elegant shape of the airplane. My favorite color is highlighter yellow, and in select areas such as the deviated stitching in the interior and

the aileron spades, it makes for brief flashes of personality amid the black and white simplicity. It's different than the more common flashy, bright colors that often cover aerobatic airplanes, but it's become a direct representation of my passions.

My passion for aerobatic aircraft revolves around adventure and athleticism as much as it does about an appreciation for fine craftsmanship, quality, and precision. It's the same reason I'm extraordinarily passionate about not only motorsports but also horology. After reading a book about the history of Swiss watchmaker Audemars Piguet, I wanted to turn one of my favorite timepieces into an abstract graphic for the tail of my plane. We digitized the movement of the open-worked Royal Oak double balance wheel. I felt it was the perfect abstract design that would look elegant and fit perfectly with the theme of the airplane. Another friend who made graphics for race cars had the design printed on vinyl, and then installed it on the vertical stabilizer and rudder of my airplane. It represents the precision to which I aspire to fly.

The opportunity to completely tear down and inspect every aspect of the airplane gave us the chance to complete a 1,000-hour inspection ahead of the routine schedule. We replaced all hardware and rod end bearings to ensure the airplane was completely fresh when completed. During this process, Michael was able to scrutinize every single part of the airframe and engine, providing me with an additional level of confidence that helped make it feel like the plane was brand new. Thankfully, there weren't too many surprises or cause for concern in the reassembly phase, which my budget was extremely grateful for.

The entire process of seeing the airframe go back together was also an excellent opportunity for me to understand the construction of the airframe and visually see how each system works. When you're flying an airplane to its

limits, it's nice to have the sense of confidence that everything is right. It's something I really appreciate as a newcomer to aerobatic flying, being able to focus on the flying without wondering about the machine. This knowledge of the airplane helps greatly reduce the inescapable paranoia associated with new sounds, sensations, and the unexpected. It also helps build confidence in managing aircraft systems, identifying and resolving issues, and cements a full understanding of procedures.

The result of this journey so far is almost the epitome of everything I could ever dream of. A mid-wing Extra 300 that is completely fresh and entirely modernized at the fraction of the price of a new airplane. Since its recent completion, I've had the privilege of flying nearly 40 hours of training in it and continue to fly it multiple times a week. I have the ambition of competing in contests with it starting in 2021. The entire process has let me build some absolutely incredible friendships with aerobatic pilots around the world. They have generously been a wealth of information and provided some remarkable experiences, allowing me to fly and learn with them across the United States, Australia, South Africa, and Europe. I have to thank Michael Bellenir for making this entire dream come true, Doug Vayda for generously giving me my first opportunity to fly an Extra, Dagmar Kress for introducing me to aerobatic flight just over 20 years ago, and most importantly, an amazing immigrant mother who reinforced the idea that you can achieve anything you dream of. **IAC+**

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# Women of Aerobatics

IAC 50th anniversary spotlight

BY LORRIE PENNER, IAC 431036

**MANY PEOPLE HAVE MADE** significant contributions to the sport and art of aerobatic flight. Some have dedicated their lives to aerobatics. Following are women who have left their mark on aerobatics and the IAC.



## BETTY SKELTON FRANKMAN

INTERNATIONAL AEROBATICS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE 1988

Few people, either male or female, have accumulated the list of credits, world records, and honors we could describe in discussing Betty Skelton Frankman's accomplishments. 1942 marked the beginning of an ambitious series of achievements. She became the first pilot to compete and perform in a Pitts Special. Aside from Curtis Pitts, Betty was the first owner of a Pitts Special, which was the smallest, lightest biplane in the world at that time.

Betty took possession of the Pitts Special, which she dubbed *Little Stinker*, and it became so famous in this country and abroad that it was put on display at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. In this airplane she entered the 1948 All American Air Maneuvers in Miami. She became the first woman to win the title of International Feminine Aerobatic Champion three consecutive times, in 1948-1950.

Betty was a co-founder of the Civil Air Patrol and achieved the rank of major. She worked for Eastern Air Lines while also obtaining her commercial, flight instructor, single-engine land and sea, and multiengine ratings. Betty became a test pilot and flew helicopters, jets, blimps, and gliders. She was presented with honorary U.S. Navy wings by Adm. J.W. Reeves in 1949, and she received honorary Royal Air Force wings when she was in Ireland. The Navy's first Blue Angels team selected Betty as its first Sweetheart of the Navy Blue Angels. In 1947 she was selected as Miss Florida Aviation.

Betty is the first woman to undergo the same physical and psychological testing given by NASA to the original seven astronauts, a feat that saw her on the cover of *Look* magazine in 1960.



## MARY GAFFANEY

INTERNATIONAL AEROBATICS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE 1991

Mary Gaffaney of Miami was the reigning queen of U.S. aerobatics for many years. She was the first American to win a gold medal in world competition, having done so at the 1970 World Aerobatic Championships.

Mary added to her list of fantastic flying accomplishments by winning the 1972-1973 Women's World Aerobatic Champion title. She forged into the lead on the first flight and never relinquished it. Flying superbly, Mary held off a determined charge by the Soviet women's team. She flew her beautiful black and yellow 180-hp Pitts Special at the competition.

If Mary had never met Curtis Pitts or gotten an airplane bottoms-up, she could still take her place in the high aerie of aviation's loftiest spires. She had an ATR (air transport rating, now called the air transport pilot license) — the Ph.D. of flying — in singles, multi, and helicopters. She had her master's in instruments, commercial, flight instructor, seaplanes, gliders, box kites, rubber bands, paper darts, all of it.

Mary talked of those early Sundays back in 1966 when they would all gather at Curtis Pitts' strip and sit in the shade and play with his airplane. She spoke of these early times softly, as a woman remembering family reunions. "I always had to use both hands to snap the old Stearman, so the first Pitts I flew, zoom! Zoom! They said it was a beautiful double snap. I had to tell them I only meant one." She acted it out, bouncing in her chair, hands karate-chopping the air, tossing her head. "It's so easy to fly. Point it, it goes; pull it, it snaps! Bang! Bang! Oh, it's fun."



## BETTY STEWART

INTERNATIONAL AEROBATICS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE 2004

Betty Stewart became involved with the IAC in 1973 when she flew her first contest as a Sportsman competitor. Hailing from Moscow, Idaho, Betty was a member of the 1976, 1980, and 1982 U.S. aerobatic teams. During this time, she quit her job as a pharmacist to train and travel for the competitions.

Betty is honored as the first person to win the world champion title at two consecutive world events. In 1980, she won three individual gold medals and the title of Women's World Aerobatic Champion in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. In 1982, she repeated this feat, winning the title, another three individual golds, and the silver team medal.

In 1996, Betty was contest director for the U.S. National Aerobatic Championship, and also served in 1996 as IAC secretary and in 1997 as director.

Betty continues to support the growth of grassroots aerobatics in both powered aircraft and gliders, serving as a judge, critiquing, and coaching aerobatic competitors.





## PATTY WAGSTAFF

INTERNATIONAL AEROBATICS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE 2005

Patty Wagstaff flies one of the most thrilling, low-level aerobatics routines in the world. Flying before millions of spectators each year, her breathtaking performances give a front-row view of the precision and complexity of modern, hardcore air show aerobatics.

Patty's first flying lesson was in a Cessna 185 floatplane, and since then she has earned her commercial, instrument, seaplane, and commercial helicopter ratings. She is a flight and instrument instructor and is rated and qualified to fly many airplanes, including World War II warbirds and jets.

She's a six-time member of the U.S. aerobatic team and the highest-placing American with gold, silver, and bronze medals, as well as a three-time U.S. National Aerobatic Champion, an IAC Champion, and a six-time recipient of the First Lady of Aerobatics Betty Skelton Award. Patty's Extra 260 went on display in the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in 1994.

She has won many awards for her flying and is particularly proud of receiving the air show industry's most prestigious award, the Sword of Excellence, as well as the Bill Barber Award for Showmanship. She also is the 1996 recipient of the Charlie Hillard Award.

During the off-season, Patty engages in such diverse projects as stunt flying for the movie and television industry, and is a member of the Screen Actors Guild, the Motion Picture Pilots Association, and the United Stuntwomen's Association. She has been a demonstration pilot for companies such as Raytheon and spent time in Africa working with the Kenya Wildlife Service giving recurrency and bush training to its pilots. Patty currently operates her own flight school out of St. Augustine, Florida.



## DEBBY RIHN-HARVEY

INTERNATIONAL AEROBATICS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE 2007

Debby has been involved in aviation her entire life, being the third generation of aviators in her family. However, when starting aerobatics in 1978, her family thought she had lost her mind.

In 1980 Debby began competition flying at a regional level. In addition to holding many offices within Chapter 25, Houston, she has been a contest director for several regional contests as well as working all positions necessary during contests. Nationally, she has been a judges school instructor and is currently an active national judge.

In 1983 Debby first qualified for the U.S. Unlimited Aerobatic Team. She had the honor of qualifying for 16 Unlimited teams and represented the United States in 15 world championships over a 31-year period. Internationally, Debby has been a CIVA delegate representing the United States.

Debby's passion goes beyond just that of the IAC. It also includes teaching, coaching, mentoring, encouraging, and promoting aviation. She has owned and managed a fixed base operation since 1979, with an emphasis on aerobatics and safety proficiency training. Her other jobs include being an FAA designated examiner, an ICAS aerobatic competency evaluator, and an air show pilot.

Currently serving as an IAC international director, Debby remains actively involved in all aspects and levels of the sport.



## LINDA HAMER

IAC PRESIDENT 1993-1996

One of the keys to the IAC's success has been the continuity in its leadership. Since its beginning, the IAC has had only 12 presidents. When Steve Morris left the presidency in 1993, Linda Hamer of Peru, Illinois, took over and continued to lead the organization based on the principles it was founded on in 1970.

Linda became an active member of IAC in 1980. By the 1994 annual election, she had the privilege of serving the IAC in a leadership position for 11 years — the first eight as IAC secretary, followed by two years as IAC vice president and one year as the first female IAC president. During her two terms as IAC president, Linda focused on new members, broadening the scope of aerobatics to all, and promoting safety and education.

Her first experience as a volunteer began in 1980 at Fond du Lac. She has worked in every area of IAC contests, competed, and judged at many regional and national competitions. On a chapter level, she has been an active participant of both IAC Chapter 61 and Chapter 1. In Illinois she also represented the IAC on the Illinois Aviation Forum, was chair of the Illinois Aviation Hall of Fame committee, and worked with the Illinois Division of Aeronautics to promote aerobatics.

Her first aerobatic competition was in 1981 in a Citabria, followed by a Steen Skybolt and a Pitts S-2A. She owned and operated Aerial Enterprises Inc. at the Illinois Valley Regional Airport in Peru, Illinois, where she taught basic aerobatics and safety maneuver training in a Super Decathlon and later the Pitts S-2A.



## VICKI CRUSE,

IAC PRESIDENT 2005-2009

“Vicki Cruse was an outstanding competitor and was passionate about flying, her leadership as IAC president, and as an EAA director,” EAA Chairman/President Tom Poberezny said in 2009. “Her flying skills and enthusiasm were highly valued.”

Vicki was born in Springfield, Missouri, and had logged more than 2,500 hours of flight time, nearly all of it in tail-wheel aircraft. She won the U.S. National Unlimited Aerobatic Championship in 2007, and was a four-time member of the U.S. aerobatic team. She served as IAC president from 2005 to 2009, and was also a board member of EAA and Unlimited Aerobatics USA Inc. Along with other awards, she earned the All Ten Achievement Award, 1998 U.S. Sportsman National Aerobatic Championship, and the 1999 and 2000 Champion of the Americas.

Among Vicki's other aviation accomplishments, she became the first woman to qualify to race in the Sport class at the National Championship Air Races in Reno, Nevada. Vicki's educational and professional background was in marine biology, and she also wrote a technical counselor column for IAC's monthly *Sport Aerobatics* magazine.

“Vicki touched many of our lives, inspiring some to pursue advanced training, or even become aerobatic competitors themselves,” said in 2009 Marion Nauman, past chairwoman of the Ninety-Nines Ventura County (California) chapter, Vicki's home chapter within the international organization, as well as an EAA member and aircraft builder. “We enjoyed her spunk and wry humor while she was with us; her exceptional determination and focus should be shared with others. Vicki's devotion to perfecting flying skills and her many accomplishments will serve as an inspiration to future generations of pilots.” **IAC+**

# Achievement Award Program Recipients

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE INDIVIDUALS** below who have applied for and received Achievement Awards from flying in a noncontest environment (Smooth Achievement) or at a contest (Stars Achievement) in the last quarter of 2019 and the first two quarters of 2020.

As a reminder, **first-time Primary or Sportsman Stars or Smooth Award applicants 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: [www.IAC.org/legacy/achievement-awards-applications](http://www.IAC.org/legacy/achievement-awards-applications).

## 4TH QUARTER / 2019

### POWER

1240	Tom Grundherr	Primary Smooth	1577	John Smith	Sportsman Stars (Keene Fall Classic)
1241	Jason Ledbetter	Primary Smooth	1578	Mark King	Sportsman Stars (Akrofest)
1242	Karl Grimes	Primary Smooth	1579	Doug Jenkins	Sportsman Stars (Hill Country Hammerfest)
1243	Alyssa Pasquale	Primary Smooth	519	Tom Grundherr	Intermediate Smooth
1244	Piotr Dlugiewicz	Primary Smooth	520	Mignon Gerry	Intermediate Smooth
1245	Seiya Yamaguchi	Primary Smooth	521	Ben Chesebro	Intermediate Smooth
759	Deirdre Gurry	Primary Stars (Lone Star)	755	Dan Towey	Intermediate Stars (Michigan Open)
760	Chris Crawford	Primary Stars (Mason-Dixon)	756	H. Thomas Sharp	Intermediate Stars (Akrofest)
761	Seiya Yamaguchi	Primary Stars (U.S. Nationals)	757	Susan Bell	Intermediate Stars (Apple Turnover)
762	Doug Jenkins	Primary Stars (U.S. Nationals)	295	Klayton Kirkland	Advanced Smooth
942	Tom Grundherr	Sportsman Smooth	296	Dave Watson	Advanced Smooth
943	Jason Ledbetter	Sportsman Smooth	203	Dave Watson	Unlimited Smooth
944	Dave Watson	Sportsman Smooth	121	Yuichi Takagi	Unlimited Stars (Coalinga)
1571	H. Thomas Sharp	Sportsman Stars (Akrofest)	122	A.J. Wilder	Unlimited Stars (Duel in the Desert)
1572	Eric Moore	Sportsman Stars (Tequila Cup)	123	Aaron McCartan	Unlimited Stars (U.S. Nationals)
1573	Edward (Bo) Kalabus	Sportsman Stars (Lone Star)	176	A.J. Wilder	ALL FIVE Smooth Achievements
1574	Ann Follinger	Sportsman Stars (Rocky Mountain House)	177	Klayton Kirkland	ALL FIVE Smooth Achievements
1575	Robert Drouin	Sportsman Stars (Sebring 80)	43	A.J. Wilder	ALL TEN Smooth and Stars
1576	Aaron McCartan	Sportsman Stars (Doug Yost Challenge)			

### GLIDER

14	Sean Goggins	Primary Smooth	28	Dale Roberts	Intermediate Smooth
15	Ben Harvey	Primary Smooth	29	Dave Watson	Intermediate Smooth
16	Dale Roberts	Primary Smooth	30	Mallory Lynch	Intermediate Smooth
17	Mallory Lynch	Primary Smooth	4	Dave Watson	Advanced Smooth
38	Ben Harvey	Sportsman Smooth	6	Dave Watson	Unlimited Smooth
39	Dale Roberts	Sportsman Smooth	2	Dave Watson	ALL FIVE Smooth Achievements
40	Mallory Lynch	Sportsman Smooth	3	Mallory Lynch	ALL FIVE Smooth Achievements

## 1ST QUARTER / 2020

### POWER

1246	John Paul Takacs	Primary Smooth	1579	Doug Jenkins	Sportsman Stars
945	John Paul Takacs	Sportsman Smooth	522	John Paul Takacs	Intermediate Smooth
1578	Mark King	Sportsman Stars	758	Doug Jenkins	Intermediate Stars

## 2ND QUARTER / 2020

### POWER

1247	Brock Ohlson	Primary Smooth	523	Chris Combs	Intermediate Smooth
1248	Chris Combs	Primary Smooth	524	Christian Baxter	Intermediate Smooth
1249	Christian Baxter	Primary Smooth	525	Mark Cunningham	Intermediate Smooth
1250	Mark Cunningham	Primary Smooth	287	Chris Combs	Advanced Smooth
946	Brock Ohlson	Sportsman Smooth	288	Christian Baxter	Advanced Smooth
947	Chris Combs	Sportsman Smooth	289	Mark Cunningham	Advanced Smooth
948	Christian Baxter	Sportsman Smooth	204	Christian Baxter	Unlimited Smooth
949	Mark Cunningham	Sportsman Smooth			

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

Power: [www.IAC.org/legacy/power-achievement-awards-home](http://www.IAC.org/legacy/power-achievement-awards-home)

Glider: [www.IAC.org/legacy/gliders-achievement-awards-home](http://www.IAC.org/legacy/gliders-achievement-awards-home) **IAC+**

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# Working Together to Prevent G-LOC

BY KEITH DOYNE, IAC SAFETY PROGRAM CHAIR

**G-INDUCED LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS**, or G-LOC, is an aspect of aerobatics that is not talked about often. However, those few occasions when it is are usually driven by real-life encounters, whether personally experienced or observed. When we start to get back into contest mode and build up our g tolerance, this is usually a good time to remind ourselves of the important details to help prevent G-LOC.

The FAA, the Australian Bureau of Air Safety Investigation (BASI), and the U.S. military have done research into the impact of g-forces in aerobatics. Unfortunately, FAA and BASI action was driven by aircraft accidents. The U.S. Navy and Air Force involvement was driven by pilots and instructors reporting instances of blacking out and loss of consciousness during aerobatic flying. The military research was conducted using centrifuges. BASI was

investigating the accident of a Decathlon in which the pilot was practicing and being critiqued in preparation for a competition. The FAA launched its investigation due to a high number of accidents that occurred in the 1970s. These investigations resulted in the publication of FAA AM-82-13 (October 1982) and BASI Research Report 872-1017 (September 1988). Both are excellent documents regarding g-forces and aerobatic sequences. The FAA

AM-82-13 used data obtained from accelerometers in Art Scholl's Super Chipmunk as part of its analysis. The BASI report used an 8KCAB Decathlon fitted out with accelerometers and flew the same aerobatic sequence as was flown in the accident.

Both the FAA and BASI use results of the U.S. Air Force and Navy research in their respective documents. Even though there is not a straightforward correlation between centrifuge testing and flying an aerobatic sequence, the results do provide valuable input to consider. As contained in FAA AM-82-13, the results of U.S. Navy centrifuge testing on over 1,000 people, including 575 naval aviators, resulted in test subjects going unconscious at an average of 5.4g with a standard deviation of 0.9g. The range for test subjects going unconscious was 3g to 8.4g. The Air Force centrifuge testing resulted in an average 5.4g with a standard deviation of 0.3g. Its range was 2.4g to 7g for the test subjects to go unconscious.

The more dangerous part of G-LOC the military researchers discovered was the time to recover. Both the Navy and Air Force researchers found the average duration of incapacitation was about 15 seconds, which does not count the amount of time for each test subject to become reoriented after they woke up. When G-LOC occurs, easily 20 to 30 seconds can go by before the pilot regains control of the airplane. If you were going a 120 mph, or 176 feet/second, you will travel 3,500 to 5,280 feet in 20 to 30 seconds. That is not a lot of distance, unless you were lucky enough to be flying straight and level. The FAA research did recognize that a pilot knowing the maneuvers to be flown can anticipate and prepare for the onset of the g-forces. This gives an estimated 1.4g increase over centrifuge testing numbers.



▲ Scholl Super Chipmunk 1970, Booker Field, prior to WAC.

Some of the pilot factors identified by the FAA and BASI to affect G-LOC are fatigue, illness, medication, stress, dehydration, and fitness level. When you combine several factors all at once, the impact can increase the chances of G-LOC occurring. We all know summer contest situations where pilots come off the judges line and now must get ready for their flights, or the safety pilot who flew with several pilots competing in the same category and then had competed in another category. It is easy to see fatigue, stress, and dehydration having a negative impact on *g* tolerance. Anticipating this, steps can be taken to mitigate and reduce the chances of G-LOC.

Another factor is sequence design. Currently, the IAC Sequence Design Committee takes care of the Known and Unknown sequences. Except for Primary, pilots are permitted to create their own Free sequence. In designing these sequences, pilots might insert their favorite maneuvers or use maneuvers that take advantage of the airplane's capabilities. In designing such a sequence, one should try to avoid situations of having a high or sustained negative *g* maneuver followed by a high positive *g* maneuver.

FAA AM-82-13 relays a situation when Art Scholl was flying a vertical eight with the outside loop on the top and an inside loop on the

bottom. Art recalled pulling to finish the bottom loop, and then woke up flying level and inverted a mile away from the practice box. He indicated not feeling well prior to attempting the maneuver. The BASI report notes the greatest danger may occur in maneuvers that subject a pilot to negative *g* just before exposure to a high rate of onset of positive *g*. Negative *g* sustained for more than a few seconds will initiate a slowing of the heart rate, and this will markedly reduce positive *g* tolerance if the positive *g* exposure immediately follows the negative *g*.

The accidents, which initiated the FAA and BASI efforts, occurred in steel-tube and fabric-covered airplanes. We are not talking about the clean, carbon-winged, high-strength monoplanes, which have a much higher *g* limit. Whether flying a glider or an airplane, no aerobatic pilot is immune to G-LOC. This is not a phenomenon reserved for the Advanced and Unlimited categories. Not everyone has been able to practice enough to build up their *g* tolerance or get comfortable with their sequences. The contest season is being pushed farther into the summer and hotter months. There are many different stresses affecting everyone, which is why we need to be more vigilant.

Whether at a practice session or a contest, everyone has some input

on the prevention of G-LOC. Pilots have the greatest control over the factors that lower *g* tolerance and open the door to G-LOC. Coaches and judges can objectively observe the pilot, both on the ground and in the air, and suggest taking a timely break or calling it a day. Judges, who review Free sequences, can talk to pilots about the placement of a high negative *g* maneuver right before a high positive *g* maneuver. Contest directors can make sure the judges line has plenty of fluids to keep everyone hydrated and allow a short break between categories, enabling tired judges to get ready for their flight. Contest safety directors can pay to close attention all that is happening and step in as needed. Starters can keep an eye out for pilots to make sure they are focused and ready to fly. Collectively, we can greatly reduce the chances of G-LOC occurring.

Have fun and fly safe! **IAC+**



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