



PILOT PROFILE

Gary James

Q. How did you get started in aerobatics?

A. Just getting started. I was a former USN fighter pilot and airline pilot, now retired, BORED, and looking for something fun to do during my "golden years"

Q. Is this your first contest? If it is, what was the deciding factor that made you want to compete?

A. Yes, this will be my first. I see it as natural to enter regional contests if you are flying aerobatics for fun. Otherwise, there is little point in it. However, I can't see myself wanting to advance beyond the "sportsman" level because it soon would become a "full time job". Plus, my little airplane really doesn't have the performance to go to intermediate.

Q. What practice time have you been able to put in leading up to this contest?

A. Unfortunately, very little due to the lousy spring weather.

Q. Do you have a coach or coaches (formal or informal)? And/or who has been your mentor or biggest cheerleader?

A. I attended "Aerobatics Camp" in March which was put on by Curt Richmond of Chapter 24. I learned a lot, but opted out of Sunday flying due to high, gusty winds. I have only 25 hours in my Pitts S2-E and am not comfortable landing in gusty winds. I have received no formal dual instruction in aerobatics and don't have a mentor or cheerleader although I wish that I did have. I can only rely on my USN training from MANY years ago.



Q. Do you own or rent an airplane?

A. Own. N82PD, a Pitts S2-E with a 200hp constant speed IO360 A1A. It's more like an S2- Purchased in March 2020.

Built by the late Paul G Dillenschneider of Arlington TX. The airframe only had 175 hours TT on it when I bought it. There is sad story about how Paul and his wife lost their life in May 2000. After Paul and his wife were killed in their C-210, his daughter had the engine pickled and locked it in the hangar for 20 years. It was put back in flying condition in late 2019 by "Aerobatic Aircraft of Texas" from whom I bought it. Jason Newburg gave me a basic landing checkout, and I've been more or less on my own since then.

Q. What "big picture" goals do you have in aerobatics?

A. To try to recover the "joy" of aviation. If you want to lose your love of flying, just become an airline pilot, that will do it for sure. After 31 years and 22,000 hours of airline flying, I don't have much love of flying any more. I am hoping that IAC competition will help me recover that love of flying. So far, I can take it or leave it. I have not recovered the joy yet, but I am hopeful.

Q. What is your favorite maneuver? and why.

A. Probably the hammerhead, because it is difficult to do well and each one is a bit different.

Q. Do you plan on attending any other contests this year? If so, what ones?

A. At this time, I intend to go to the four regional contest here in Texas. I don't intend to fly long distances to attend other events.