



bring the Advanced World Aerobatic Championships into being, but the second contest, held in Lawrence, Kansas, demonstrated that the effort was well spent. The professionalism, the camaraderie, the smoothness with which the organization played itself out in the briefings, flights, and awards banquet, provided a role model for running a World Contest...one that might be of value to those organizing the much older and better recognized Unlimited World Aerobatic Championships.

BY DAVID GUSTAFSON PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID GUSTAFSON

AWAC, as the Advanced competition is called, went off without a hitch, save some errant thunderstorms that shut down the fourth and final flight...a mere six pilots from completion. In all other respects, the organization was flawless and the sequence of events exceeded everyone's expectations.

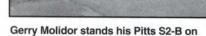
Lawrence, provided a quaint and picturesque, if hot and muggy backdrop to the flying. The rural airport has filled the spaces between runways with a corn crop that was reaching for elephant's eyes when the contest started. So aerobatic aircraft rose out the corn and then disappeared



Ray Gill flying his distinctive Pitts S1-S.

signed up, but didn't show.

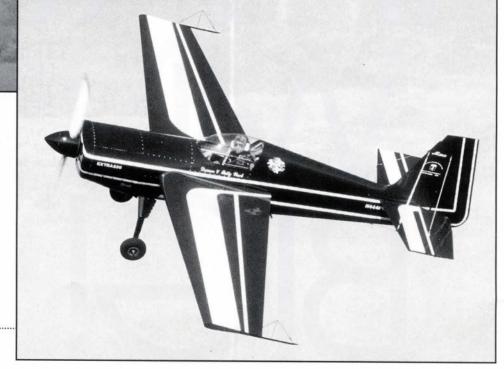
The most popular aircraft, especially with pilots from countries of the former Soviet Bloc and South Africa, was the Yak 55, and there were five of the large monoplanes on the field (flown by 20 pilots). The Americans preferred the Pitts, though they also had Patty Wagstaff's old Extra 230 (now owned by Damon Wack) and Henry Haigh's odd Haigh Special (a



the wing for the camera plane.

temporarily back into it at the start and finish of each flight. Corn has mysterious powers: the message coming out of the field of dreams was that the aerobatic box had been built and "they" had come. Actually 55 pilots from 14 countries participated, including teams from Japan, Argentina, and Brazil which were making their debut at AWAC. The only group conspicuously absent was the French, who had

Damon Wack owns and flies Patty Wagstaff's old Extra 230.



retractable biplane) which was flown by Chris Panzl. Gerry Molidor flew his Pitts S2-B; John and Matt Morrissey (father/son) flew an S1-11B; Glenn Frick brought his S1-T; and Ray Gill and Gary Henry went into the acrobatic box with their S1-Ss, Variations on the Zlin 50 were shared by almost as many pilots (13) as those flying the Yak 55. And then there was Doug Jardine of Canada, flying a new One Design.

The first flight, a Freestyle, set a pace that didn't vary much in terms of the first four places. Janusz Kasperek won the gold medals in the Free and then in the two Unknown flights that followed, earning him the title of Advanced World Aerobatic Champion. He did his flying in Damon Wack's Extra 230. Gerry Molidor was second in the initial flight, and though he traded places with Matt Morrissey on the first Unknown, he was back in second for the final flight, which put him in second place for the overall totals. Matt, who dropped to seventh place in the final flight, wound up

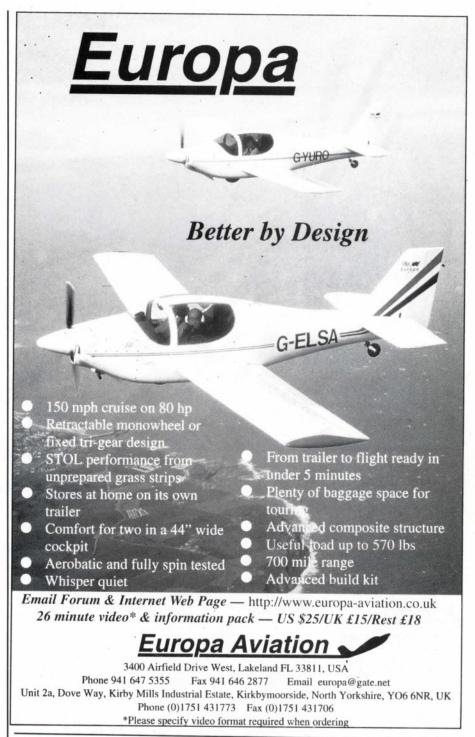
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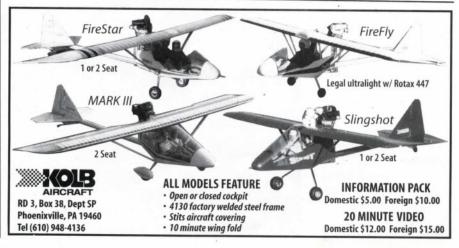
taking the bronze in the individual standings. He was the only pilot to go home with bronze, silver and gold medals. John Morrissey finished fourth, fourth, then eleventh in the final flight. Even with the lower score for the third sequence, his total score put him in fourth place for the final standings and made him a part of the winning team.

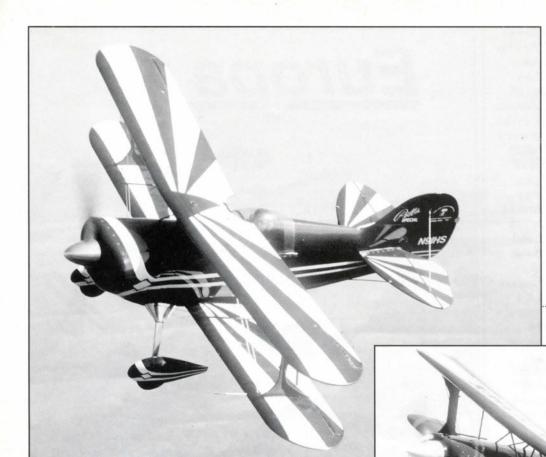
With Americans in second, third and fourth place for the final standings, the title was indisputably theirs as the top team. The second-place team was made of the top three Russians and they weren't even close to the Americans in terms of final score. The Slovaks took third in the team standings.

It was a strong finish for the Americans. Their consistency and the quality of their flying provided a good cause for national pride. The eight Americans all flew well and worked together well with a strong sense of team spirit.

There seemed to be universal







was kept very busy evaluating flights and grading them.

The final awards banquet was held at a private residence in Lawrence, a large estate owned by Jim and Bonnie Schwartzburg, located beside a golf course. The outdoor setting, the warm weather, the jazz band and the food were excellent. The Schwartzburgs picked up the tab for the entire

Wearing traditional red and white colors, Gary Henry banks his Pitts S1-S around the camera plane.

Matt and John Morrissey took turns flying this slick S1-11B.

agreement among all those who had been at the Unlimited World Aerobatic Championships in Oklahoma City the year before, that the Advanced contest was vastly superior in terms

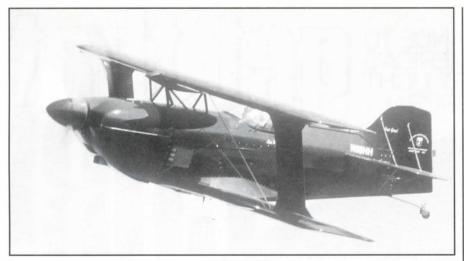
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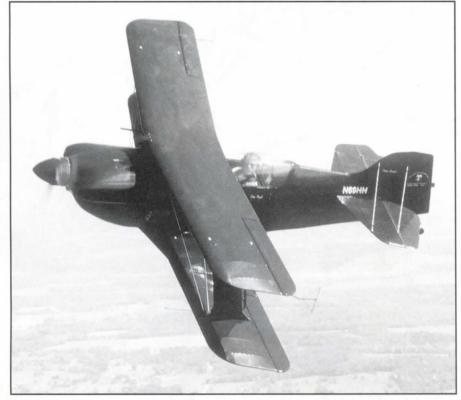
of weather, organization and execution. All of the pilots got along well and though there was a strong sense of competition in the mess tent, the mood that prevailed from the 7:30 am briefing through dinner was one of respect and good humor. The international jury in attendance at the event had little to do during the week of flying in terms of responding to protests. The international panel of judges, on the other hand,



Glenn Frick's bumble bee painted S1-T.



One of the most interesting aircraft was the odd Haigh Special flown by Chris Panzl. The retractable gear gives the craft a distinctive look.



group of 80-90 people. It was a firstclass program.

Boris Baird ran the contest and kept it on track. It ran like a well-oiled train. Boris was presented with a President's Award by IAC President Dick Rihn at the conclusion of the contest.

Participation of the US Advanced Aerobatic Team is made possible by the United States Aerobatic Foundation (USAF) which ministers to the needs of three acrobatic teams: Advanced, Unlimited and Glider. Thanks to Frank Price, the United States was represented at the first Unlimited World Aerobatic Championships in 1960 and has been part of the event ever since. The World Contests for each category are held every other year, with the Advanced and Glider groups now alternating with the Unlimited power planes. Most of the contests are staged in Europe, which makes transporting the teams and their aircraft an expensive proposition. So the fund raising efforts never stop. The USAF engages in a variety of activities to solicit funds, one of the most impressive right now being their J-3 Cub raffle (see article in this issue). If you'd like more information on a way of helping the team that might also help you, call (888) 678-USAF.

The first AWAC was held in South Africa. A location has not been picked yet for the 1999 contest, but there's a good chance it may be held again in the United States.



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