

OSHKOSH!

AirVenture 2013



HENRY HOLDEN
reports

THIS YEAR'S 61st AirVenture, was typical of those past. New airplanes, products, personalities and a fabulous air show seen by more than 500 000 visitors.

It seems that every year there are anniversaries and first-time aviation events to be celebrated. This year was no exception.

One of the icons of aviation, Mooney, celebrated 60 years, and although the company is currently not manufacturing, there are over 7 000 aircraft in service.

Several dozen North American AT-6/SNJ flew in to celebrate 75 years under its wings. About 19 000 T-6s were built between the US and Canada, and more than 1 000 are still flying.

The legendary Pratt & Whitney Canada (P&WC) PT6 engine celebrated its golden anniversary. P&WC has delivered more than 52 000 PT6 engines in 90 variants, into 130 different aircraft, and they have flown in excess of 390-million miles.

Missing from this year's AirVenture were the current military aircraft that could usually be found on the grounds. Due to the Federal budget cuts, they were a no-show.

There were two history-making events that had been fantasies for as long as can be remembered. The ability to really fly, that is, launch into the sky without the drawback of an airframe was finally achieved by Jetman.

The other event was one that Henry Ford predicted in 1940: "Mark my words," he said, "a combination airplane and motorcar is coming. You may smile, but it will come."

Seventy-three years later it turns out Ford



Thumbs up from Jetman! (Photo: EAA)

was right. The ability to drive down the highway and effortlessly transition into the air and fly became a reality at AirVenture with the first public flight of the Terrafugia Transition.

JETMAN

It's a bird! It's a plane! *No, it's Jetman!* Yves Rossy, aka Jetman, entered the history books as the first and only person in aviation history to fly with a jet-propelled wing. Rossy's flying machine, called the Jetwing, consists of a small eight-foot folding wing made of a carbon-Kevlar composite, with four jet engines, each putting out 49,4 pounds of thrust.

Jetman launched from a helicopter at 6 500 feet and flew above the crowd for almost 10 minutes before activating his parachute to land. But, before he landed he managed to do



Terrafugia's Transition makes its flying debut at AirVenture. (Photo: EAA)

a few aerial somersaults.

A hand-held throttle controls the engines, but Rossy uses his body to manoeuvre the aircraft, moving his shoulders, legs and arms to climb, descend and steer.

Since 2008, he has flown trips over the English Channel and Rio de Janeiro. He has also flown in formation with a Dakota owned by his sponsor, the Swiss watchmaker Breitling. But the Oshkosh flight was his first at a US air show.

AIRCRAFT, CAR OR BOTH?

The first show day saw the maiden flight of Terrafugia's Transition, which has been displayed as a development prototype at Oshkosh for several years.

"EAA has watched and encouraged Terrafugia's efforts ever since it made its first appearance at Oshkosh in 2006," said Jim DiMatteo, EAA's vice president of AirVenture features and attractions. "To see the Transition take the next step and make its first flights before a large-scale public audience gives us a glimpse of what's possible in personal transportation."

The Transition is a light-sport aircraft that combines driving and flying in one state-of-the-art vehicle. Glass cockpit avionics, carbon fibre construction and innovative mechanisms make the Transition fun to fly, drive, and convert. A steering wheel, gas, and brake pedals make it familiar to drive, while a stick and rudder pedals provide control in flight.

The aircraft drove from the exhibit area with the company's chief test pilot, Phil Meteer, at the controls. Once on the ramp, the wings unfolded, and Meteer stepped out of the cockpit to conduct a pre-flight before driving down to the end of the runway for takeoff.

The airplane lifted off effortlessly, and flew

around the field several times, then, after landing, the wings folded up again, and Meteor drove off the field to meet the crowd at Phillips 66 Plaza.

HONDAJET

HondaJet had let it be known that it was bringing an FAA-conforming jet to opening day.

Not only did it bring what it said it would, but CEO Michimasa Fujino took to the podium with EAA Chairman Jack Pelton in front of a red jet – the company's third FAA-conforming airframe – and a blue one, the fifth of six conforming airframes was in Honda's exhibition hall.

Four are used for flight testing and two for ground structural testing.

PIPER CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARIES

July 27 marked the 30th anniversary of the first flight of the pre-production Piper Malibu. July 29th marked the 60th anniversary of the inaugural flight of the twin-engine prototype Piper Apache.

Piper Aircraft delivered the factory-fresh 800th M-Class piston-powered single-engine pressurised Piper Mirage to Muncie Aviation Co. at this year's show.

The six-place Piper Mirage is powered by the Lycoming TIO-540-AE2A 350-hp engine and has a 213 knot maximum cruise speed with a range of 1 343 nm. It is equipped with the Garmin G1000 avionics suite.

Piper also had two Twin Class aircraft on show: a Seneca V and a Seminole, both with Garmin G1000 avionic suites. Each model received a type certificate this year.

Piper reported a steady three-year increase in sales and delivered 86 aircraft, and had a revenue of \$77-million for the first half of this year, compared with 76 aircraft, and \$69-million recorded for the same period last year.

BEECHCRAFT'S ENTIRE LINE

Beechcraft brought its entire current line of commercial aircraft: King Air 350i, King Air 250, King Air C90GTx, Baron G58 and Bonanza G36, and a 1943 Beechcraft Staggerwing.

This was the first time at Oshkosh for the company's AT-6 light attack aircraft, which covers a wide-mission spectrum including training, manned intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and light precision attack, while offering non-traditional capabilities for homeland defence and civil support missions.

CESSNA'S SINGLE-ENGINE LINE-UP

Cessna has introduced three new single-engine products to the general aviation market in the past twelve months. "Cessna's three new aircraft all offer distinct strengths and capabilities," said Jodi Noah, Cessna senior vice



(Photo: Andrew Zaback)



(Photo: Andrew Zaback)



EAA Photo

The world's only privately owned Harrier VTOL fighter.



(Photo: Deon Wentzel)

Show-stopper supreme



(Photo: Deon Wentzel)

president of single engine/propeller aircraft. The Grand Caravan EX, the Jet-A-fuelled Turbo Skylane JT-a, and the Cessna TTx all took centre stage.

"Speed, performance and utility are all hallmarks of the newest Cessna single engine aircraft," said Noah. "The TTx, delivers

unmatched speed and luxury for our single engine pilots. Customers continue to rave about the performance and efficiency of the JT-A, while the versatile Grand Caravan EX remains the hands-down favourite as the powerful utility aircraft of choice in the global marketplace," Noah added.

The all-composite TTx currently holds the title of the fastest commercially produced and certified fixed-gear single engine aircraft in the world. The aircraft recently received type certification and is already being delivered to customers.

Upcoming TTx units will be equipped with flight into known icing (FIKI) de-icing systems. This proven de-icing technology extends the mission capabilities of the TTx.

The first production flight of the Jet-A fuelled Turbo Skylane JT-A took place in May 2013, and it has since logged almost 200 hours.

DIESEL SKYHAWK CONVERSION PROJECT

Redbird announced a new initiative to convert Cessna Skyhawks to diesel power using Continental's 135-hp Centurion 2.0. The project is called Redhawk and is aimed at the training market as an alternative to conventional avgas fuelled trainers.

The target price is under \$200 000. According to EAA Chairman Jack Pelton who flew Redhawk #1 at the show, the diesel's overall operating costs would be about 15% less than the equivalent gasoline engine.

Pelton called this significant and one likely to have extensive market impact, particularly in parts of the world where avgas or any aviation fuel other than Jet A is unavailable.

ANOTHER FUEL ALTERNATIVE

With the continuing rise in the price of avgas and the escalating cost of pilot training (in part due to fuel costs), as well as the issues of lead emissions, there may be a viable alternative on the horizon.

Aviat Aircraft introduced a 180-hp Husky that uses compressed natural gas (CNG). This dual fuel hybrid is the first piston-powered aircraft that the pilot can switch from avgas to CNG with the flick of a switch and a throttle adjustment.

The advantages are huge: CNG is cleaner, it's 138 octane, and costs less than a dollar for the equivalent of one gallon of 100LL.

The Aviat Husky CNG, flew more than 1 000 miles from Aviat's headquarters in Afton, Wyo., to be at AirVenture. It is a standard Aviat Husky A1-C that has been fitted with a CNG fuel tank in addition to its standard fuel tanks.

The aircraft is powered by a 200 hp, four cylinder Lycoming aircraft engine with a cruise speed of 143 mph. The flight endurance at 65%



(Photo: Dean Wentzel)



(Photo: Dean Wentzel)



(Photo: Dean Wentzel)

power setting is approximately seven hours.

CIRRUS DELIVERS IN 2015

Cirrus president, Pat Waddick, announced that the first customer deliveries of the SF50 Vision Jet will occur before the end of 2015. He cites new technologies such as the massive fuselage lay-up moulds, an autoclave oven, a robotic seven-axis trim and drill station, and more for increase in production activities.

Cirrus also announced the selection of the SR22 as the pilot training aircraft for the Royal Saudi Air Force. Saudi Arabia is the third national air force to select the SR series aircraft as trainers.

SHAKEDOWN AT OSHKOSH

In April, mandated Federal budget cuts which included grounding military participation in most air shows went into effect. The FAA



(Photo: Dean Wentzel)

announced that it expected to save \$25-million from closing 149 towers because they would not be staffed with air-traffic controllers.

In May, the FAA demanded the EAA sign a contract and make a payment of \$447 924, in two parts – half immediately, and the balance one week after the event, to cover the cost of salaries for 80 controllers, transportation, etc. Failure to pay would result in the FAA not

providing ATC services.

"We have consistently regarded the FAA's move as holding AirVenture and GA hostage this year," said Jack Pelton, the EAA's chairman. "This affects AirVenture and numerous other aviation events throughout the nation in an unauthorised and unjustified manner. That is why we are seeking review, and relief, from the court.

"The EAA had no choice, but to pay the 'ransom.' Diminished or cancelled ATC services, would threaten safety.

"During the event and the arrival and departure periods, Wittman Regional Airport, becomes the world's busiest airport. It would be irresponsible and an unacceptable risk to attempt to hold AirVenture without full appropriate ATC support," Pelton concluded.

Cancelling the event would probably be fatal for the organisation. →

GIB
AVIATION
INSURANCE BROKERS

**Integrity Intelligence Energy
at your service**

Selvan Govender selvan@gib.co.za Ann Gurney ann@gib.co.za
Richard Turner richard@gib.co.za Damien Ricketts damien@gib.co.za

Tel: +27 (0)11 483 1212, GIB House, No 3 West Street, Houghton, Johannesburg. FSP Licence No. 9303 www.gib.co.za

W10 - 09/2012