



RAF commemorates Ryan Field airport gift

Story by Mike Collins, AOPA reprinted with permission from the Oshkosh, 2012 news www.AOPA.org

The Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF) dedicated a new “legacy rock” July 25 in front of the brown-arch entrance gate to EAA AirVenture. The inscribed two-foot-by-two-foot tile memorializes Ben and Butch Ryan’s donation of the airport they built, Ryan Field, to the foundation.

“We’re here to recognize one of the most significant donors and donations that has been made to the RAF,” said Tim Clifford, a director of the organization. He said the RAF plans to recognize others at future AirVentures.

John McKenna, president of the foundation, thanked the Ryans for their significant contribution to the RAF and the aviation community. “The implications of their gift are far-reaching and a tremendous example,” he said.

McKenna said that Ben Ryan had presented a logbook to the organization showing that he soloed July 27, 1941, at Gen. Mitchell Field near Milwaukee—which made the timing of the presentation especially appropriate. Ryan became an Army Air Corps pilot. “Ben flew P-39s and P-38s, and survived bailing out of a P-38,” McKenna said.

Following a successful career in the oil and gas exploration business, Ryan and his wife Butchie—who was an Army nurse during World War II—built a home and airstrip in the shadow of Glacier National Park.

“When the call came to the Recreational Aviation Foundation that asked if we were in the business of saving airports, it was a pleasant surprise,” McKenna said, adding that he hopes their generous donation will inspire the preservation of additional airports. “We hope that others will follow this special example.”

“In about 2003, Butchie and I realized we were getting old, and wanted to do something with our airstrip,” said Ben Ryan, now 89. A friend introduced them to the foundation. “The RAF had the same vision that Butch and I did—to keep that airport open to everyone.”

More and more people visit Ryan Field every June for the RAF’s annual fly-in, he noted.

Gordon Rock of Mercer Island, Wash.—an RAF sustaining supporter—arranged for the organization to sell 37 tribute tiles beneath the iconic brown arch on the AirVenture grounds. The RAF’s designated area is located near the welcome shade of the old oak tree just south of the symbolic entrance to the AirVenture flight line.

The plaza in front of the arch is composed of two-foot-square tiles, which the RAF calls legacy rocks; the organization intends to recognize and pay tribute to its significant financial partners who help to support recreational aviation. The venture also will establish an endowment to assist in the RAF’s long-term financial stability. The first two inscribed rocks were permanently placed in 2011 to recognize RAF’s founders and current directors.



Sixty-six years of separation evaporated when Ben Ryan climbed the ladder of the P-38, Glacier Girl, at Oshkosh 2012 — it was 1946 when Ben last flew a P-38 in the final days of World War II. As he sat down in the cockpit, one could see the flood of memories that filled his face. On July 25 the Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF) dedicated a new “legacy rock” in front of the brown-arch entrance gate to EAA AirVenture. The inscribed two-foot-by-two-foot tile memorializes Ben and his wife Butch Ryan’s donation of the airport they built, Ryan Field, to the foundation.

Administrator's Column

AOPA Live: The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) has unveiled a news broadcast. The television-style webcast offers a look at the week in general aviation. This new show is posted on AOPA Live each Thursday and offers a rundown of the week's stories. Running 20 to 30 minutes each week, AOPA Live This Week covers issues including manufacturing, regulatory and legislative affairs, and technology. The show also contains visits to interesting GA spots and the experiences AOPA's editors have along the way. The show is available online and will be posted every Thursday morning. Check it out at: <http://www.aopa.org/aopalive/>

Medical Exemption Request: An extension has been granted until September 14 to comment on a petition asking the FAA for an exemption that would give pilots flying recreationally an alternative to the third class medical has been required by the EAA and AOPA. Under the exemption, they would be able to fly, with certain limitations, by completing a medical awareness online course and carrying a driver's license in lieu of a medical certificate. Pilots participating in the exemption would be able to fly noncommercial day-VFR operations in a single-engine, fixed-gear aircraft with 180 horsepower or less and four seats or fewer, carrying up to one passenger. An estimated 86,000 aircraft would qualify for use under the exemption. Submit your comments at www.regulations.gov and searching for Docket FAA-2012-0350.

What Does Roger Really Mean: We learned to use "Roger" early on in our aviation education to confirm we heard and understood what the other person said. But what happens when you are at an airport and tell ATC that you need to do something and they respond with "Roger?" It is not an authorization - the Aeronautical Information Manual is the authoritative source for proper aviation communications. Take an opportunity to review communication procedures in the AIM: http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/atpubs/aim/. And remember "Roger" only means that someone heard what was said; it does not give authority to do something.

FAA accepts knowledge-test reform plan: An advisory committee has recommended improving test materials; the FAA will implement most recommendations. Industry organizations requested forming the panel to refocus knowledge testing on safety-related, practical testing material, responding to concerns about unexpected changes to the knowledge tests. Last year the FAA agreed to reconsider unannounced changes to some knowledge tests and to re-score some test-takers' exams, resulting in some passing. The agency also agreed to revise knowledge-test guides available online making changed subjects available for study for 90 days before new test questions would appear. The industry is pleased with the FAA's positive response to the recommendations.

New President at NATA: The National Air Transportation Association (NATA) has named Thomas L. Hendricks as the association's new president. Hendricks will begin his duties on September 1. He succeeds James Coyne, who has served as NATA's president since 1994. He most recently served as the senior vice president, safety, security and operations for Airlines for America, where he was responsible for all airline technical and operational functions. He was also responsible for developing and shaping advocacy and policy positions on flight operations, safety, engineering, air traffic management and security. NATA, the voice of aviation business, is the public policy group representing the interests of aviation businesses before Congress and the federal agencies. Many of you had the opportunity to hear from Jim at the 2009 Montana Aviation Conference, when he provided the kick-off lunch address.



Montana and the Sky
Department of Transportation

Brian Schweitzer, Governor
Tim Reardon, Director

Official monthly publication of the
Aeronautics Division
Telephone - (406) 444-2506
Fax - (406) 444-2519
P.O. Box 200507
Helena, MT 59620-0507
www.mdt.mt.gov/aviation/

Debbie K. Alke, Administrator

Aeronautics Board
Tricia McKenna, Chairman
Robert Buckles, Member
A. Christopher Edwards, Member
William (Bill) Hunt, Jr., Member
Fred Lark, Member
Fred Leistiko, Member
Roger Lincoln, Member
Chuck Manning, Member
Ted Schye, Member

Montana and the Sky
is published monthly
in the interest of aviation in the
State of Montana.

Third Class postage paid at
Helena, Montana 59604

Editor: Patty Kautz

Calendar of Events

August 12, 2012 – Lions Club Drive-In, Fly-In breakfast and Model Airplane Show at Hysham Airport beginning at 7:00 a.m. For further information contact Bob Miller at (406) 342-5252.

August 17-19, 2012 – Montana Fun Weekend Car Show and Fly-In, Cut Bank Airport. Friday night burnout contest and Lawn Chair Drive-In movie. Show and shine for cars and aircraft on Saturday, bowling ball drops Saturday afternoon, \$500 price for direct hit; drag racing Saturday night. Cash awards for cars and planes with breakfast Saturday and Sunday mornings by Moose Lodge 334. Free camping on site, lots of tie down area, courtesy cards available. For further information, phone Roy Nollkamper at (406) 450-1078 or Dave Ries at (406) 229-0376.

September 14-16, 2012 – Mountain Search Pilot Clinic, Kalispell City Airport. For further information contact Dave Hoerner at (406) 444-9568 or email dhoerner@mt.gov.

January 11-13, 2013 - Surratt Memorial Winter Survival Clinic. For further information contact Dave Hoerner (406) 444-9568 or email dhoerner@mt.gov.

February 8 & 9, 2013 – Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic. For further information contact Dave Hoerner (406) 444-9568 or email dhoerner@mt.gov.

February 28-March 2, 2013 – Montana Aviation Conference. Copper King Hotel, Butte. For further information contact Patty Kautz at (406) 444-9580 or email pkautz@mt.gov.

Walter's Renews Master CFI Accreditation



Clifton O. Walters, a 4-time Master and SAFE member, recently renewed his Master CFI accreditation. A US Air Force veteran, Cliff is a flight and ground instructor with North Star Aviation (www.NorthStarAviation.net), a full service FBO at Hamilton's Ravalli County Airport (6S5). He specializes in primary, instrument, multiengine, and aerobatic flight training. Congratulations Cliff!

Spotted Bear Ranger District Air Livery Permit System

The Spotted Bear Ranger District, on the Flathead National Forest, has enacted a special use permit system for air livery services to its three backcountry airstrips at Spotted Bear, Meadow Creek, and Schafer Meadows. This process was started in 2008 and signed in to effect in March, 2011. Six operators were chosen who could demonstrate prior commercial use of these airstrips and willing to go through the application process to receive their special use permits. These operators include:

Red Eagle Aviation – Jim Pierce, Kalispell; (406) 755-2376
Glacier Jet Center – Mike Talbot, Kalispell; (406) 755-5362
Minuteman Aviation/Glacier Heli Tours – Jerry Mamuzich, West Glacier; (406) 387-4141
Kruger Helicopter – Jim Kruger, West Glacier; (406) 387-4565
Montana by Air – Rick Geiger, Cutbank; (406) 949-5709
Piedmont Air Services – Lowell Hanson, Helena; (406) 442-8108

The intent of this special use permit system is to bring the commercial services currently being provided in line with National Forest policy and Federal regulations. Ninety-five percent of all fees collected through this permit system are retained on the local district. These funds will be used for airstrip maintenance projects including noxious weed control, improved visitor services, i.e. interpretation, visitor information, signs, etc., and facility repair, maintenance and enhancement.

Please contact Deb Mucklow, District Ranger or Tad Wehunt, Special Uses Administrator at the Spotted Bear Ranger Station for any questions, (406) 758-5376

Aerotrionics Celebrates 50 Years in Avionics

Story by Christine Knauer reprinted with permission from the July, 2012 issue of Avionics News Magazine, a monthly publication of the Aircraft Electronics Association

Fifty years ago, Richard Van Luchene and A.J. Lundquist started Aerotrionics in a small garage in Billings, Mont., outfitting customers' aircraft with instruments and avionics.

"At the time, vacuum tubes were state of the art, and a Narco MK-12 was top of the line," said Steven Vold, co-owner, general manager and 37-year veteran of the company.

Today, Aerotrionics sells, services and installs avionics on general aviation, commercial and experimental aircraft for both domestic and international customers. The Federal Aviation Administration-certified repair station also coordinates closely with local aircraft interior upholstery experts, as well as an aircraft maintenance facility, making Aerotrionics a one-stop shop for customers.

Vold and Garry Wirrell, co-owner and vice president, oversee 20 employees in more than 15,000 square feet of hangar and office space. Much of the equipment they work on, from traffic avoidance systems to primary flight displays, is so sophisticated, so advanced it would have been unrecognizable as avionics during the company's early days.

"We service a majority of general aviation aircraft from Super Cubs to light jets, from helicopters to military aircraft," said Vold, who enjoys flying his 1949 Piper PA 11 Cub Special over Montana's big Sky Country. "We also provide service to a great variety of experimental aircraft for avionics and instrument maintenance. Each day can bring new surprises and challenges for our staff."

In 1995, Aerotrionics expanded into experimental- and sport-built aircraft avionics. Martin Elshire, another owner in the business at the time, spearheaded the move. By adding support for experimental aircraft, the new division diversified the company's capabilities and brought in more customers.

"It also added growth and technical advantages rarely found in a single avionics company," said Wirrell, who manages Aerotrionics' experimental division today.

The expansion turned out to be a revelation for the owners. Working on experimental aircraft took considerable time and effort, and it quickly became the most labor-intensive part of the business.

"It may take several years of involvement with the customer, continually keeping them up-to date on changing technology until they are truly ready for the system," Vold explained. "Documentation of drawings, photography and equipment requires great detail and organization as it could be years before the system we create is installed, and we must be prepared to support that system seamlessly and quickly."

Wirrell added that the extensive design and testing that goes into each customer's plug-and-play panel is a time-consuming task. Aerotrionics creates ready-to-install, plug-and-play panels with CPC plugs that easily accept the customer's existing aircraft wiring.

"Usually each plug-and-play panel is crated without the customer being on-site," said Wirrell, who learned electronics and communications while in the Air Force and later learned to



The Aerotrionics team includes (front row, from left) Gordon Dewey, Tierani Losing, Melanie Clark, Lisa Caron, Jeff Goodman, Steve Vold, president and Gary Wirrell, vice president; (second row, from left) Jason Smith, Andre Todd, Ron Kalvig, Jeff Matye and Karl Loch; (back row, from left) Tom Binon, Jacob Javonovich, Isaac Horn, Chuck Schmid, Les Hergenrider and Mike Harwood. Not pictured are Gary Herem and Paul Arbizzani.

fly as a civilian. "Therefore, much time is spent in two-way communications offering equipment options, instrument layouts, matching colors and finishes, and making sure their input is accurately addressed to meet their satisfaction."

To ensure quality and help make the panels easy to maintain for the owner-builder, the company's customer service includes functional testing and inspection; organized, simple and complete documentation; and a specialized customer service representative to chaperone the process and answer questions.

Aerotrionics' experimental aircraft customers are as diverse as the aircraft they build, but they do tend to have several things in common, according to Vold. For most, building an aircraft is part of a lifelong dream, a chance to show off their creativity and create an aircraft that fits their flying needs.

"An experimental- or sport-built aircraft project is typically a long-term investment of time for the owner-builder, and most often we become part of that process from the very beginning," Vold said. "In some cases, we have been in a relationship with a customer for more than 10 years before the project is ready for the avionics."

"As time goes on, we are in regular contact with these customers to help them along the way with more than the avionics and instruments, but also offering a social network to make their projects easy and enjoyable."

In reaching out to the experimental community, Aerotrionics has exhibited at EAA's AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wis., since 1995.

Aerotrionics, continued

“We like the show because the people there are having a great time, and it shows with their positive attitude and enthusiasm,” Vold said. “AirVenture is a lot like a family reunion. Customers are eager to let us know about their progress and their advantages with their new airplane.”

Recently, Aerotrionics expanded again, this time online, adding e-commerce trade at its newly updated avaitonsmall.com website. The site sells pilot supplies, aircraft parts and used equipment.

“It has drawn a lot of attention from pilots and owners, and we are very pleased with the results,” Vold said. “We’re using social media, newsletters and aviation events around the country to stay in contact with our original customers and establish new relationships at the same time.”

According to Vold, this ability to change and adapt, along with an appreciation for new technology as well as fearless motivation, will help drive Aerotrionics’ business for another 50 years.

“Since the beginning, our approach has been to stay current with new technology, provide continuing education for our employees, and invest in new equipment and market research and planning to ensure we’re ready for the changes when they come,” Vold said.

Much Accomplished at Work Session Despite the Weather

The Schafer Meadows work group was smaller than usual this year due to thunder storms on Friday and windy conditions on Saturday, but at least 11 aircraft and 20 plus individuals showed up despite the weather conditions to give their helping hand. The volunteer group moved the runway cones, cleaned the outhouses, put up new wind socks, painted the windsock standards, leveled mole mounts and worked on some fencing projects. Deb Mucklow of the Forest Service had to leave late in the afternoon due to the lightning storms starting numerous fires in her district, so she missed out on the meal that Loren Smith provided. The menu consisted of hot roast beef sandwiches on steak buns with au jus, barbeque sauce, potato salad, baked beans, watermelon, kool-aid and smores for dessert. Thanks to all whom participated and of course Loren for providing the delicious meal.



Moving Runway Cones.



Thanks to Loren Smith for providing a top-notch meal for all the hard workers!



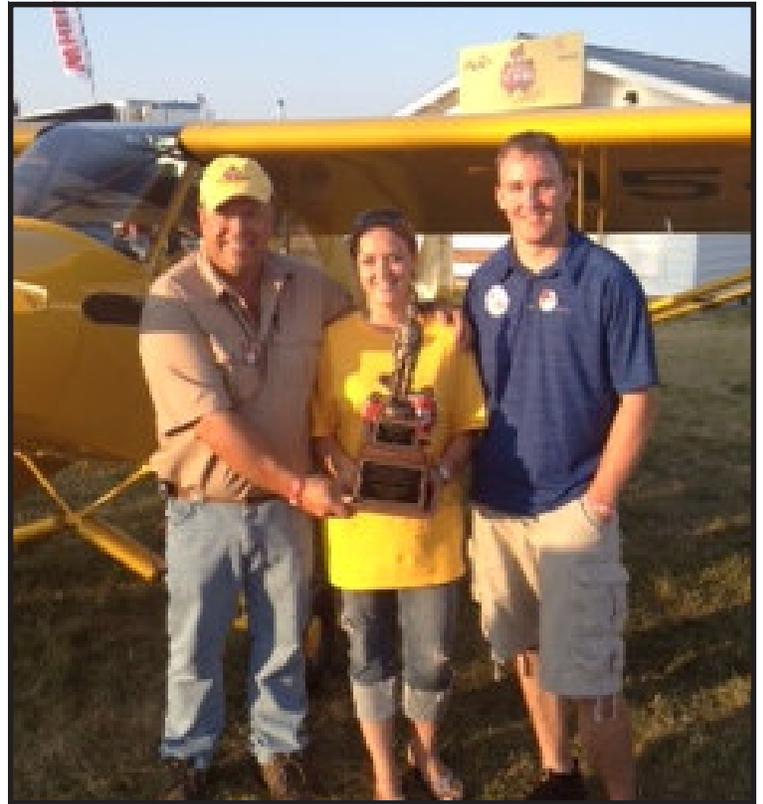
Relaxing by the campfire after a long day.

Montana Airplane Receives Grand Champion Trophy at Oshkosh



Photo by Larry Mayer

Roger Meggers of Baker Montana received the Grand Champion trophy from Oshkosh for his 1949 Piper PA-18, N5410H, S/N 18-1. Attendance at Oshkosh topped one-half million. Showplanes this year totaled 2,489 including 978 homebuilt aircraft, 907 vintage airplanes, 336 warbirds, 105 ultralights, 97 seaplanes, 35 aerobatic aircraft and 31 rotorcraft. Congratulations Roger – that is quite an achievement! Pictured is Roger and his daughter Samantha and son Darin proudly displaying the trophy. And the Grand Champion aircraft piloted by son Darin.



L&C Composite Squadron Take Part in Missing in America Program

Item and photo submitted by Lt Col Semple

On 13 July, the Lewis & Clark Composite Squadron Color Guard was proud and honored to take part in the internment of seven veterans who were laid to rest at the Montana State Veteran's Cemetery at Fort Harrison under the auspices of the "Missing in America Program." Four of the veterans were from the Kalispell area, one from the Columbia Falls area and two from the Billings area.

Hundreds of motorcyclists with the Patriot Guard escorted the remains of the seven soldiers to the cemetery where a crowd of people joined civilian and military dignitaries gathered to pay their respects to these veterans.

Brigadier General Matthew Quinn, State Adjutant General, commented, "You look at the crowd, you look at the people here to pay respects to veterans that they didn't know. But they know they were veterans and Montana comes together to honor those that went before us." Montana Lieutenant Governor John Bohlinger was presented an American flag from the ceremony that will be displayed in the governor's office to commemorate these seven veterans' service.

The seven former servicemen who were laid to rest were: Jon W. Ball (Army, Vietnam), James M. Brodnial (Army, Vietnam), Orville C. Hatch (Army, WWII), Anthony Mills (USMC, 1977), Michael L. Shannon (Army, 1974-1975), Charles J. Shelton (Navy, WWII), Charles R. Spears (Army, 1955-1958).



C/2d Lt Brendan Sloss, C/SMSGt Brent Neace and Capt Kim Sloss salute as the Honor Guard Detail carrying burial flags for the seven veterans interned at the Montana State Veterans Cemetery during the "Missing in America" funeral service held 13 July 12 at Ft. Harrison, MT. The "Missing in America Project" goes to funeral homes across the state to find unclaimed remains of veterans who died without the presence of family or friends and gives them a proper funeral with full military honors. <http://www.beartoothnbc.com/news/helena/24541-missing-in-america-honors-veterans-with-military-funerals.htm>.

Alexis-The Insane Grizzly Bear

By David J. Hoerner

The first time I saw Alexis, she was charging straight toward me like a runaway locomotive. It wasn't a bluff, this was the real thing. Her small beady black eyes were staring straight through me. If I were on the ground, I wouldn't give a split nickel for my chance of surviving.

Over many sightings I was amazed to see her strength, fearlessness and aggressive behavior. I'd been flying and finding grizzly bears with a Canadian Grizzly Bear study located just across the border in the upper North Fork of the Flathead Valley of Montana.

The region is adjacent to Glacier Park with high craggy mountains, heavy tree covered valleys and populated with wild animals, not homesteaders.

The biologist Bruce lived in a small cabin that was located just north of the United States and Canadian Border and within walking distance to the Moose City Airstrip.

During the summer months he captured and placed transmitter collars on the bears. These transmitters made it possible to find the bears, study their habits, locate them and get a population count.

One bear that we would see often was a grizzly called Alexis; she wasn't your average bear. On my first sighting I asked Bruce, "why the name Alexis?"

"Do you remember the TV show Dallas?" he asked.

Of course I did, it was a show that portrayed a rich, non-functional Texas Family that lived on a large ranch named The South Fork.

One of the women in the show was the ex-wife of the wealthy ranch owner. She was rude, self-center, and obnoxious, her name was Alexis.

Bruce continued, "Each bear when snared will act different, some show agitation and some turn and try to run off or hide. But this bear was different; she was ready to tear someone or something apart."

"The animal was skinny, almost hairless, but what caught my eye was her head. It was way too big for its body and egg shaped, completely deformed. When the bear saw us she charged toward me, I wasn't sure the snare would hold." replied Bruce.

"She wouldn't take her eyes off me, if looks could kill... or if anyone walked between me and the bear, she never noticed that other person... I just knew that bear would kill me if she got the chance."

Over the next year we would see Alexis from the air often and she would charge the airplane. In the spring we'd see her with new-born cubs and then a few flights later, no cubs. We didn't know if she ate them or just ran away from them.

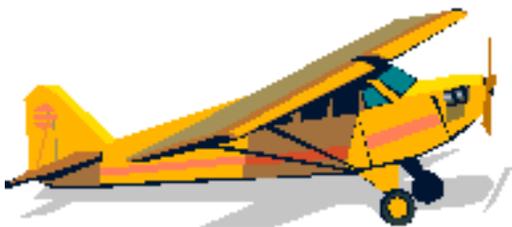
Every summer in Glacier Park there are a couple of human mauling's. I wasn't surprised to hear that a man was mauled at the upper end of Kintla Lake and Alexis's transmitter was in the same area; she was dubbed the bear that mauled the hiker. Although I doubted it, I didn't believe Alexis would leave anyone alive.

One dark night Bruce was in his cabin, a strange feeling came over him. Alexis was outside and a sleepless night followed as the bear wandered around. The next morning Bruce packed up and left the North Fork for a month.

On one last flight that we looked for Alexis her collar omitted a mortality signal. With guns loaded Bruce slowly made his way to the collar and bear, it was still attached. Alexis had been killed by another bear, her neck was broken backwards and buried to the shoulders. She was one of a kind bear that I won't soon forget.

The use of an airplane made it possible to provide information that verified the high concentrations of Grizzly Bears in northwest Montana. This information will help authorities make recommendations on delisting or not delisting the great bears.

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program or activity of the Department. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information call (406) 444-6331 or TTY (406) 444-7696. MDT produces 1,800 copies of this public document at an estimated cost of 39 cents each, for a total cost of \$702. This includes \$483 for postage.



Aeronautics Division
Montana Department of Transportation
2630 Airport Road
PO Box 200507
Helena, Montana 59620-0507

August, 2012

Pre-Sort Standard
US Postage Paid
Helena, MT 59620
Permit No. 141



Hoerner's Corner - Practice Makes Perfect

Every year back country airport work sessions are performed by volunteers around the state of Montana. The government agency or controlling parties maintain these airports with the help of volunteer pilots and organizations. Everyone wants to be pro-active in helping with the work load and fix the small things at these remote runways.

During these sessions cones get replaced or moved, falling timber around the perimeters is cut and stacked for firewood. The names of the airports spelled out on rocks or bricks gets fresh paint and holes get filled in.

The evenings are filled with gatherings around a smoky camp fire telling stories of last year's flying adventures. It's a great time to get caught up on rumors, meet new friends and make plans for adventures to come.

Most pilots that show up for these sessions are familiar with the terrain and the area weather conditions. But knowing is not the same as being flight proficient.

To avoid having a high rate of flight accidents or incidents during these work sessions, don't wait for the day of the session to get comfortable with your mountain flying techniques. Practice at your home runway until you can land at your selected spot every time and at your short field landing speed.

Practice makes perfect, you owe it to yourself and family to be the best you can be.

