

Pilot Profile: Pierre Deschenes

by Russell Knetzger

Pierre is one of at least four pilots at the Milwaukee County R/C Field who are foreign born. The others (as they came to the United States) are Viktor Zernickel (Germany), Milan Zdrubeky, (then Czechoslovakia now Czech Republic) and Kemel Sarlioglu (Turkey).

Married to a German girl, one can assume Pierre, with his substantial French-accented English, must have grown up in France near the German border. Wrong. He is French Canadian, and grew up in Quebec. His engineering degree from Three Rivers University in Quebec landed him a job with a small electronic firm in Michigan. A few years later he accepted a job with Borg Instruments - the same Borg of Borg-Warner transmissions. Borg in 1990 sent him to their plant near Stuttgart in SW Germany, home of Mercedes Benz automobiles, (which Pierre has owned.) That's how he married a German girl.

After 8 years working for Borg in Germany, Pierre worked two years for Magneti Marelli in Paris, France. Borg lured him back to Borg's Wisconsin plant in 1999. Pierre "reverse commutes." Living in Muskego on Milwaukee's far southwest side, Pierre heads even farther southwest each morning to the Borg plant in Delevan, where climate controls and rear lighting modules are made for cars.

It was in Germany that Pierre developed his skills in radio control model aviation. Like American clubs, flight instruction comes free from fellow club members. His German club preferred to instruct on gliders, and the same buddy-box system is available. German radios are on 35MHz, almost in line with American Pierre explained at the RAMS December, 2005 club meeting how he tries to spend his 27MHz which is still legal, but mostly avoided due to interference from overpowered truck "CB" units.

The pilots transition to powered flight after mastering the glider. Due to much stricter noise abatement attitudes in Europe, engine powered aircraft are allowed only if a field is a mile or more from a city line, and even then the maximum noise level is 82db at 80 feet.

Pierre explained at the RAMS December, 2005 club meeting how he tries to spend his summers



Pierre Deschenes at the 2004 AMA Nats

traveling on weekends to clubs in and around Wisconsin to attend their "Fly-Ins." He has gone as far as Indiana, Illinois, Delaware and Minnesota. It is a chance to mingle with new people, see a variety of aircraft, and see how other fields operate.

In the process of making such visits, he feels he is building up an interest in members from other clubs to come to Milwaukee. He represented the RAMS at the last two NATS in Muncie, Indiana.

Pierre is one of those pilots who not only enjoys visiting different fields, he enjoys a wide diversity of model aircraft.

At the Milwaukee County Field he has flown engine power from .40 cu. in. displacement all the way up to giant scale chain saw engines. He has flown some electric, and some .15 sized combat with Bill Geipel. But he has not flown helicopters.

Currently Pierre is finishing a 1/5th scale Hellcat from Bates plans. He is also working on a 1/5th scale LA-7 the club has not seen before.

Like other scratch-build pilots who have mixed feelings about ARF (Almost Ready to Fly) models Pierre continues to build, but also buys ARFs or near finished models from other pilots. Some of his love of handcrafting comes from his grandfather, who was a lutier building guitars and violins.

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