

Pilot Profile: Pete Cicero

by Russell Knetzger

Not many people have migrated from Brooklyn, NY to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but Pete Cicero is one of them. And it is the US Navy that facilitated it. After being raised in Brooklyn and graduating from high school in 1965, Pete joined the US Navy. They sent him to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, still operating near Waukegan, Illinois, just 48 miles south of downtown Milwaukee. He found Chicago too big and too dirty a place to visit on a weekend pass. However, Milwaukee suited him just fine, though in driving up USH 41 he was disappointed to not see dairy cows. When he finished Basic and ET-Electronic Tech training at Great Lakes in 1967, he had visited Milwaukee enough to have met and married his first wife.

Following Great Lakes, Pete and his bride were stationed in Virginia. From that base Pete served in Iceland, and in touring the Caribbean Sea aboard an Attack Transport, a ship-type not known to most civilians. It is quite large, capable of carrying 6 heli-

**U.S. NAVY Hoffn,Iceland
1965-1969 Caribbean Sea**



Above: Pete Cicero with his 1980's era "Smoothie," powered by a SuperTiger G21 .46 cu.in. engine.



Above Another 1980's era favorite of Pete Cicero, his Cessna Ag Wagon crop duster with an OS FS .40 Surpass engine, photo in his basement workshop.

icopters, a contingent of US Marines, and LST type landing craft to put the Marines ashore. Practice landings were made in Cuba at Guantanamo Bay, and cruises at sea could last 6 months. Upon leaving the Navy in July, 1969, Pete adopted Milwaukee and parlayed his ET training into a job with Cutler Hammer "in the valley" next to what is now the I-94 freeway south of downtown. Pete's only child, Jason, was born of that marriage.

Pete then changed his life in two ways. He left Cutler Hammer to try auto sales, and to try model aviation. Both clicked for Pete. Both were reinforced by fellow car salesmen Rudy Fortuna and Bill Sterka of the Electrons. Rudy was Pete's flight instructor. Bill was Electrons' President in the early 1980's as the club made their historic move from Aero Park to their present site in the Menomonee Falls Nature Preserve. Pete sold for Slocum Pontiac, Soerens Ford, and others. Now age 63, Pete is able to semi-retire, selling cars only part time. He left model aviation when he and his wife of 20 years divorced. Now he's returning to aero modeling. Pete and Judy live comfortably in a New Berlin condo.

RAMS HORN, Aug. 2010 Russell Knetzger, Editor
Rainbow Aero Modelers Society, Franklin, Wisconsin