



## ICAS Foundation Air Shows Hall of Fame Class of 2015

### John Mohr

The undisputed virtuoso of Stearman biplane air show performances, John decided early in his 38-year air show career that rather than upgrade his 220-horsepower stock Stearman, he would study and master energy management, sequence optimization, aerodynamic ground effect and other aerodynamic tools of world-class air show performers. He read every book available on aerobatics and carefully observed those pilots whom he sought to emulate: Bob Hoover, Art Scholl, Duane Cole, and Bob Heuer. He combined that knowledge with his own remarkable skills as an aviator to create an air show act that was entertaining to general audiences, but awe-inspiring to pilots who viewed his abilities as nothing short of phenomenal. He expanded his repertoire by offering a J-3 Cub comedy act, and his plane-to-helicopter transfer act with Roger Buis was all the rage within the North American air show community for several years.



John Mohr and his signature 1943 stock Stearman

John was also a thoughtful and generous member of the air show community. He was an active Aerobatic Competency Evaluator (ACE) and served for several years on the ACE Committee. He was a reliable advocate for air show safety, but espoused fewer regulations and more self-policing among air show performers.

John got an early start. He soloed a J-3 Cub at the age of 14 and was a regular attendee at the EAA convention as a teenager. He experimented with radio-controlled aircraft as a kid and learned about the mechanics of aircraft from his father and grandfather. He has been a captain for a major U.S. airline for many years.

### The Red Baron Pizza Squadron

The Red Baron Pizza Squadron grew out of a brilliant promotion originally scheduled for a single year by the Schwan Food Company. Beginning in 1979, barnstorming pilots dressed in period clothing cruised the U.S. in 300 horsepower Stearman, making appearances and towing banners to promote the newly created Red Baron brand. The program's popularity caused the company to revisit and eventually extend the run. As barnstormers will do, the pilots began to innovate beyond the job description to evolve the program to include promotional rides, formation flying and aerobatics. The final pieces fell into place with the conversion to 450-horsepower engines and the hiring of a veteran announcing team. The Pratt & Whitney 985 engines allowed the team to perform tight four-ship formation aerobatics and more challenging maneuvers.



The Red Baron Pizza Squadron Stearmans built between 1938 and 1943

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Key to the success of the Squadron was their maintenance crew's passion and its highly skilled specialists. The original crew chief climbed the ranks to become an air show team pilot in the late eighties. After a hiatus, he returned to the team as Director of Maintenance (DOM) and remained with the Squadron as DOM and support pilot. He was the last Red Baron to fly on a regular mission, bringing the last plane home to Minnesota in the dead of winter. Fifty-five pilots (16 of which performed in air shows) and dozens of maintenance and support personnel served with the Red Baron Squadron over 29 years, from 1979 to the end of 2007, and became a lasting part of its culture and legacy. At its height, the Squadron fielded two four-ship teams and maintained a stable of additional promotional pilots.

The Red Baron Pizza Squadron brought a new perspective and set new standards for sponsorship in the air show industry. They set a new example for civilian team organizations and inspired others. Lastly, they made millions of friends and fans in and outside of the air show industry.

## M.A. "Sonny" Everett

**S**onny comes from a family of fliers. Hired for his first air show announcing gig in 1963 at age 17, Everett has been a guest on numerous TV and radio shows; has been featured in movies as an actor and stuntman; and serves as an expert commentator on aviation safety matters. As an announcer blessed with a voice with depth and clarity, his narration style has been described by spectators as taking them on a trip, adding the right script at the right time to enhance an event.

Sonny's skills are not limited to announcing. His first published photography appeared at the age of 14, when photos he took were printed in a local New York paper. He hasn't stopped taking photos and video since and has an eye for beauty and balance. He is a published writer, having authored "Fliers," a coffee table book of early air show acts and personalities. He has also been on the other side of the camera and was featured in the cult favorite air show movie from the 70s called "Cloud Dancer" starring David Carradine. It is Sonny's voice that you first hear, and the person you first see, and he actually had more on-camera lines than the star. He is also the voice for the Airshow America DVD series that to date has sold over 3,000 copies. Sonny is always there to support those needing narration or voice-overs for a charitable project or an industry video.

As an air show industry historian his knowledge and memory of events and significant dates is second to none. He is called on by those in the industry whenever they need help with a fact or clarification to support a project. Many members of our air show family can trace their first inspiration and influence to an event where Sonny was announcing. Sonny is a retired U.S. Airways captain who now resides in central Florida.



Sonny Everett