

## **AeroShell Aerobatic Team Biographical Information**

### **Mark Henley – Team Lead**

Mark has been flying airshows for over 35 years. Mark was interested in flying at an early age, and developed a passion for vintage aircraft. His father, Tom was a collector of classic planes, so the opportunity to fly Stearmans, Cubs, Champs, T-6's and Mustangs came his way. Mark enjoyed flying the T-6 so much he decided to buy one for himself in the late eighties. Before joining the team he performed in a stock PT-17 Stearman, North American AT-6, and North American P- 51D.

He has flown over 100 different types of aircraft and has type ratings in the AD4 Skyraider, Grumman TBM, Boeing B-17, Douglas DC3, Consolidated B-24 Liberator and the North American B-25 Mitchell. He holds a letter of Authorization (LOA) that covers all piston powered experimental aircraft, single and multiengine. He also holds a letter of Authorization (LOA) that covers all piston powered experimental aircraft, single and multiengine. Mark is also a Designated Pilot Examiner and a certified Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic. He is married to Anna Laura, and has three children, Tanner, William, and Jonathan. Mark's T-6 is named Miss Tanner, after his daughter. He and Alan Henley, co-founder of the Team, are twin brothers.

### **Steve Gustafson – Left Wing**

One of the Team's founders, Steve soloed the very T-6 he flies with the Team while a junior in high school. By the age of 23, he had accumulated over 4,000 flying hours. Steve holds a commercial, multi-engine instrument pilot license and a type rating in the North American B-25, and is also type rated in the FG1D Corsair. He is a CFI single and multi-engine instructor, seaplane rated, and is a certified commercial aerial applicator. He is a graduate of Sowell Technical University with an A&P license.

The son of the late Merle Gustafson (Angel of Okinawa Corsair fame), Steve started flying air shows at the age of 19 and has inherited his Dad's skill for aerobatics and formation while acquiring a competence and style all his own. Steve is also an ICAS ACE Examiner. He has recently retired from an aerial application business in Tallulah, LA, and also farms over 450 acres of cotton and corn. Having logged over 25,000 flight hours with no end in sight, Steve says flying with the team is the most challenging flying he has ever done. He is married to Julie, and has three children, Jennifer, Brad (also a pilot), and Ashlyn.

### **Bryan Regan – Right Wing**

Bryan dreamed of flying for most of his childhood and absorbed as much information as possible from books and films. He furthered his interests through attending airshows and joining organizations such as EAA and the Civil Air Patrol. Although he grew up in among a CAF membership in South Louisiana that included the likes of Merle Gustafson, Bryan would not meet Steve or the other members of the Aeroshell team who shared the same skies. He would not even find the means to pursue flying on a serious level until college. After seeking any opportunity to fly during the first year, including hauling skydivers, he began riding along on night freight runs in Beech-18s, eventually turning the opportunity into a job washing, fueling and maintaining the aircraft. This led to a meeting with airshow pilot Earl Cherry, who would employ Bryan as a relocation pilot and crew chief ("The Greatest Crew Chief Alive")

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for three years. Next came a sixteen year stint with the Red Baron Squadron, flying all four positions including airshow lead for the last four.

The Aeroshell Team found itself in need of a backup lead pilot in the summer of 2008 and Bryan had both the availability and the experience to fill the position. Alan refers to him as his "Stunt Double". He has a Commercial single and multi-engine license with an instrument rating and over 7,500 hours, nearly half of which is formation aerobatics. When not flying, Bryan pursues auto racing, most recently on dirt tracks. He lives mostly in beautiful Arizona, but still calls the south his home, especially Louisiana.

### **Jimmy Fordham – Slot**

Jimmy began flying at age 14, taught by his father. By age 18 he had obtained his Commercial, Instrument, Multiengine, Seaplane, and Instructor ratings. He was introduced to airshow flying in the late 1970's by Marion Cole and Merle Gustafson. During this time, he flew a Pitts Special, Midget Mustang, and Schweitzer 126 Sailplane. Jimmy has over 22,000 hours of flight time in over 100 types of aircraft, and retired from Delta airlines as a senior captain on the Airbus 330.

### **Gene McNeely – Reserve Slot (Retired 2017)**

Gene became interested in flying while in high school. He served a tour in the Navy, and used the G.I bill to realize his dreams of flying, then began flight instructing and crop dusting. Gene operated his own agricultural business for over twenty years, then began another business as an air cargo service operating Beech 18's, DC-3s and MU-2s. Gene discovered his passion for the T-6 while watching Steve Gustafson's father fly one in an airshow.

Gene happened to be at the air show as a spectator when Merle was flying a T-6. Gene saw Merle's performance in the T-6 and said, 'I gotta have one of those!' In addition to performing in one of these vintage trainers at air shows, Gene races in his other T-6 at the Reno Air Races and has been finishing in the top five since 1986. Gene is also active in homebuilding aircraft, and has built several experimental planes. His latest project is a Van's RV-8. Gene is married to Iris, and has two sons, Greg and Eugene.

### **Alan Henley – Team Lead and Founder**

Alan Henley is the original founder and Team Lead for the AeroShell Aerobatic Team. In late July of 2008, Alan suffered a severe neck injury while playing with his children at home, leaving him paralyzed from the chest down. His injury has forced him to deal with major challenges in recovery, yet he fights every day to regain the use of his limbs with his signature courage, spirit, and determination. His heart and soul fly on with the Team at every show, and every loop and roll the Team does is flown with the conviction that he will one day fly with us again.

Alan and his twin brother Mark were raised in an aviation family, where flying was a way of life. After soloing at age 16, Alan transitioned quickly from flying the family's Cessna 140 and J-3 Cub up to the T-6. After graduating from West Alabama University in 1980, Alan discovered an interest in aerobatics that would eventually lead to a successful career in airshows. He flew the family's Stearman in several

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airshows, and then began flying the T-6. He met Steve Gustafson at an airshow in Jackson, Mississippi, and the two formed what would later become the AeroShell Aerobatic Team.

Alan is a CFII in both airplanes and helicopters. He holds FAA Type Ratings in the North American B-25, Grumman C-1, Grumman TBM, Douglas A-26, Douglas AD-4 Skyraider, Douglas DC- 3, Lockheed 18, and an unlimited LOA for experimental aircraft. He is also an ICAS ACE Examiner, and an A&P Mechanic. He has recently been inducted into the USAF's Heritage Flight Program, flying vintage warbirds in formation with modern fighters. Alan is married to Jennifer, and has two children, Skylar Grace and Brandon Cole.

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### **The AT-6 Texan Advanced Trainer**

Nicknamed “The Pilot Maker”, the North American AT-6 Texan first appeared in 1938. Originally designed as a basic trainer for the United States Army Air Corps (USAAC), the Texan was the primary training platform for all U.S. airmen in World War II that went on to fly fighter aircraft such as the P-51 Mustang, F4U Corsair, P-40 Warhawk, and others.

#### **SPECIFICATIONS:**

Engine: Pratt & Whitney R-1340 AN-1

Wing Span: 42 ft.

Length: 29 ft. 6 in.

Maximum Take-Off Weight: 5,617 lbs.

Maximum Level Speed: 212 mph

Normal Range: 870 miles

Armament: Under wing attachments for light bombs and rockets