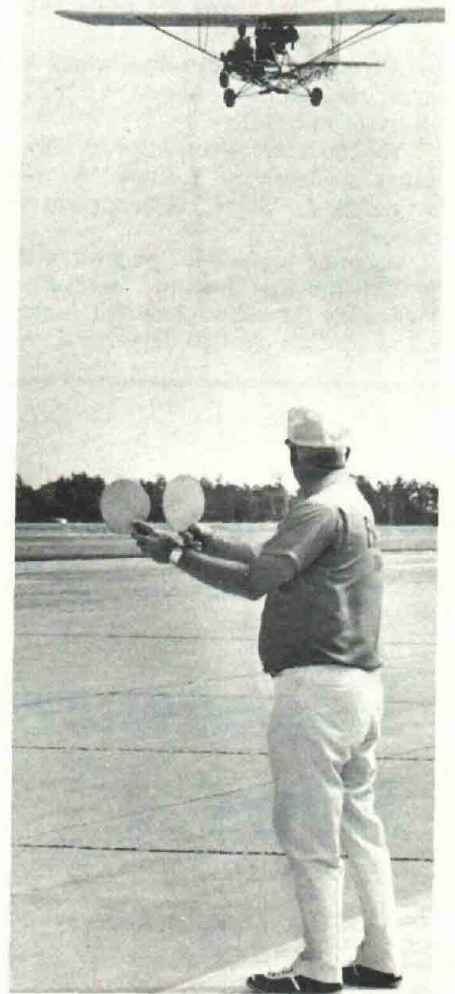


OSHKOSH '71 A WHOPPER!

By Jack Cox



PEOPLE AND PLANES descended on Oshkosh's Wittman Field this year like the proverbial swarms of locusts! As of this writing the EAA accounting department is still poring over the facts and figures in order to come up with accurate numbers on attendance, however, some preliminary information is available.

Aircraft registration was up 25% over last year, the greatest percentage of increase from one year to the next since the very early days of EAA. In 1970, a total of 607 show planes were registered for the week — this year 828! Homebuilt registration jumped from 280 in 1970 to 338 in 1971 — an increase of 58. Many EAA members can remember when there weren't 58 homebuilts at an EAA Fly-In!

The new Classic Airplane category accounted for 288 registrations but perhaps is not so significant as the big increase in homebuilts because many Classics were counted in the antique and "special" categories in years past.

Numbers alone, however, do not tell the story of Oshkosh '71. This was a year of quality with a capital "Q"! Some of the most outstanding workmanship ever seen at any aviation event was on display at Oshkosh this year — in homebuilts and in restorations of antiques and Classics. The judges are probably still in a state of shock!

Complete results will appear in the October "Fly-In edition" of *SPORT AVIATION* but the big winners were:
Grand Champion Homebuilt — Pazmany PL-1 N60SP built and owned by Sam Pawlowski of Akron, Ohio. This was one of the most spectacular homebuilts ever to be presented at an EAA Fly-In. It was bare metal and highly polished — really daring, for any scratch or dent

in the sheet metal would have shown — and featured a beautifully fitted black leather-like interior. It also walked off with the coveted Mechanix Illustrated Award for outstanding workmanship.

Grand Champion Antique — Vultee V-1A Special NC16099 restored by Harold Johnston of Pueblo, Colorado. This magnificent single engine, 10 passenger transport was built in 1936 for millionaire-publisher William Randolph Hearst on a no-expense-spared basis. It was a "special" because it was fitted with a 1,000 hp Wright Cyclone and a 3-bladed prop. The plane was sold at the beginning of World War II and spent a checkered career in Central and South America before finally being abandoned in Pueblo, Colorado. Johnston bought the remains at a Sheriff's sale and spent 4 years restoring it to its Grand Champion condition.

Grand Champion Classic — 1946 Spartan 12 restored by Ed Wegner of Plymouth, Wisconsin. This one-and-only tri-gear Spartan was to have been a post-war development of the popular Pratt and Whitney powered "Executive" of the late 1930s, however, was abandoned in the great aviation market slump of the late 1940's. Wegner had to remanufacture much of the plane's structure due to corrosion of several magnesium members with which Spartan had been experimenting. Ed also owns a beautifully restored 1929 Spartan C-3 biplane.

Grand Champion Warbird — Grumman FM-2 "Wildcat" restored by Gunther Balz of Kalamazoo, Michigan. A star of the evening Warbird fly-bys at Oshkosh, this "Wildcat" has been restored to World War II navy colors and markings.

Several special events and competitions were held in conjunction with the Fly-In Convention. The annual A C Flight Rally was divided this year into two categories — amateur built and factory built — with winners and identical prize money for each. The amateur built category was won by Wallace Carlberg of Minneapolis in his Wittman Tailwind and the factory built were led by Michael Nallick also of Minneapolis in his Navion. Both received \$250.00 prize money for their winning efforts.

At nearby Fond du Lac Airport EAA's International Aerobatic Club held its 4 category competition with the following results:

- Unlimited Category — 4 contestants —
 Winner — Gene Soucy (Pitts Special)
 Cleveland, Ohio
- Advanced Category — 7 contestants —
 Winner — Henry Haigh (Pitts Special)
 Howell, Michigan
- Intermediate Category — 20 contestants —
 Winner — Verne Jobst (Pitts Special)
 McHenry, Illinois
- Sportsman Category — 30 contestants —
 Winner — Giles Henderson (Cub)
 Charleston, Illinois

Of special interest was the fact that 7 women pilots competed, 5 in the Sportsman Category.

42 states, the District of Columbia, and 5 Canadian Provinces were represented on the show plane registration list. Greatest distance flown was from Anchorage, Alaska — William Fike made it in his 65 hp Fike Model E, an original design featuring all wood, geodesic wing construction.



(Dick Stouffer Photo)

At long last one of the scaled-down Mustangs made an appearance at Oshkosh. This is the two-thirds scale P-51 built in Canada by Sturgeon Air Ltd. (formerly Falconar). It was quite impressive in both high and low speed passes down the fly-by runway.



(Dick Stouffer Photo)

Making its debut at Oshkosh was Dave Blanton's side-by-side biplane, the "Wichawk." Powered by a 180 hp Lycoming, the "Wichawk" is a good performer. A bubble canopy will be attached for winter flying.

While adjoining mid-western states were represented in greatest numbers, many show planes flew from both coasts to make Oshkosh '71 the greatest Fly-In Convention ever. 38 aircraft came from California alone — 54 in all from states touched by the mighty Pacific. Somehow 109 planes made it from eastern seaboard states that were plagued by bad weather during the week. The state sending the greatest number of show planes was Illinois with 160!

Much was new at Oshkosh '71 — items:

Workshops on building an Emeraude spar, a BD-4 wing and fuselage, the lost art of welding aluminum with a torch, aircraft covering, engine assembly, building tube fuselages, and much more were extremely popular.

Jim Bede had his BD-5 "Micro" on hand for inspection — but not for flight demonstrations. The sleek little bird was not quite ready by Convention time.

Many new homebuilt designs made their debuts this year — names that will become familiar in the years to come: Bakeng "Duce", Aerosport "Rail", Marquart "Charger", Monett "Sonera", Blanton "Wichawk", Steen "Skybolt", Spencer "Aircar", and others.

Pitts Specials led the homebuilt registration again this year, but T-18's pushed hard for the top spot. No less than 25 of John Thorp's beauties were on hand, many from California. 32 Pitts led all homebuilt "brands."

The Goodyear blimp "America" was on hand all week and even participated in the evening aerobatic show on Friday! Passing slowly in front of the crowd at near ground level, the ponderous craft suddenly pulled up into a spectacular chandelle ending with a full stop on top — then backing up!

Oshkosh '71 was a record breaker in every respect — the number of show planes, itinerant planes, traffic count, number of campers, etc. It was a great week for EAAers and for aviation . . . and work has already begun for next year's Convention to be held July 30 through August 5, 1972.



(Dick Stouffer Photo)

One of the big attractions, literally, at Oshkosh was the Goodyear blimp "America." One pilot was heard to remark, "That's the world largest wind tee!" Night flights over the area were spectacular — colored lights on the blimp's side flashed messages and geometrical patterns.