

President's Page

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What's In A Name?

I am writing this month's column over Memorial Day weekend. As we have done over the past four years, several IAC members organized and donated a flyby to coincide with a small Midwest town's Memorial Day parade. This year's flight featured two Sukhoi 29s, an AT-11, a Yak-52T, a CJ-6, and a T-6. The flyby's air boss orchestrated the aircraft to pass overhead just as the Memorial Day ceremony was completed. It once again helped the parade start with a little something special and made veterans and their families feel special, too.

For obvious reasons Memorial Day this year had a renewed sense of meaning with the Iraq war brought to us live and in color on television. To truly understand the sacrifice, one would have to do something knowing in advance that there was a good chance of being killed in the process. This is truly an act of courage and unconditional love of country. To all veterans, past and present, and to the families who continue to endure the ultimate sacrifice necessary to protect our way of life, I would like to say thank you. It is appreciated and will never be forgotten.

A couple of years ago, the ideas associated with a possible name change to our organization were exhaustively discussed at board meetings. Over the next year, a consensus was developed to proceed with floating the idea to the membership. As unveiled recently at the membership meeting at Sun 'n Fun, the board and I are extremely sensitive to the perception of our longtime members. With that in mind, we have devised a yearlong introduction to what we believe is the correct path to follow.

You might ask why we should change the name. Why now, and what are the benefits of a name change? I asked these same questions myself, and as time went on, it grew on me to the point that I think now is exactly the right time.

Our founding fathers boldly envisioned a world organization that would spread around the globe. The only problem with this is that we have the authority to sanction aerobatic events only in the United States. The aero clubs of individual

countries hold their own sanctioning authority. To imply that we are international in authority is incorrect; what we are is international in passion. We value our international membership very much, and I believe they will appreciate our attempt to positively progress this passion with a name that more accurately reflects who we are.

When I was appointed to this job last year, our management team was tasked with renewing enthusiasm and renewing the way we do business. My management team was confronted head-on with hosting the World Aerobatic Championships in Lakeland. We were tasked with getting the Aerobatic Rally concept up and running for the benefit of all pilots, competitive or not. We were tasked with encouraging our members to feel the pride and benefit of belonging to an organization that not only embraces the passions of stick and rudder flying in the United States, but also embraces these passions from around the world. Make no mistake about it, however; we are recognized from our international colleagues as the aerobatic organization of the United States. I am proud of this and hope you will be, too.

The board proposes a name change from the International Aerobatic Club to the United States Aerobatic Association and to use the logo name of Aerobatics USA. At Sun 'n Fun we had merchandise items that showcased this fresh look, and they sold well. Aerobatics USA merchandise will be available throughout the remainder of the year at the WAC, EAA AirVenture Oshkosh, the U.S. Nationals, and also via mail order. Check it out and see what you think.

What I am asking of Chapters is to discuss this proposal not from the point of why change, but rather from the point of view of realizing the possibilities of a positive change. Our organization is moving forward again, and even though there is much, much more to do, we are making progress. As for the proposed name change, the membership has the power to embrace or reject this effort at next year's membership meeting at Sun 'n Fun. The board and I believe that you will embrace the new patriotic name as appropriate to the positive course our organization is on. Be safe, learn lots, and have fun! ✈

