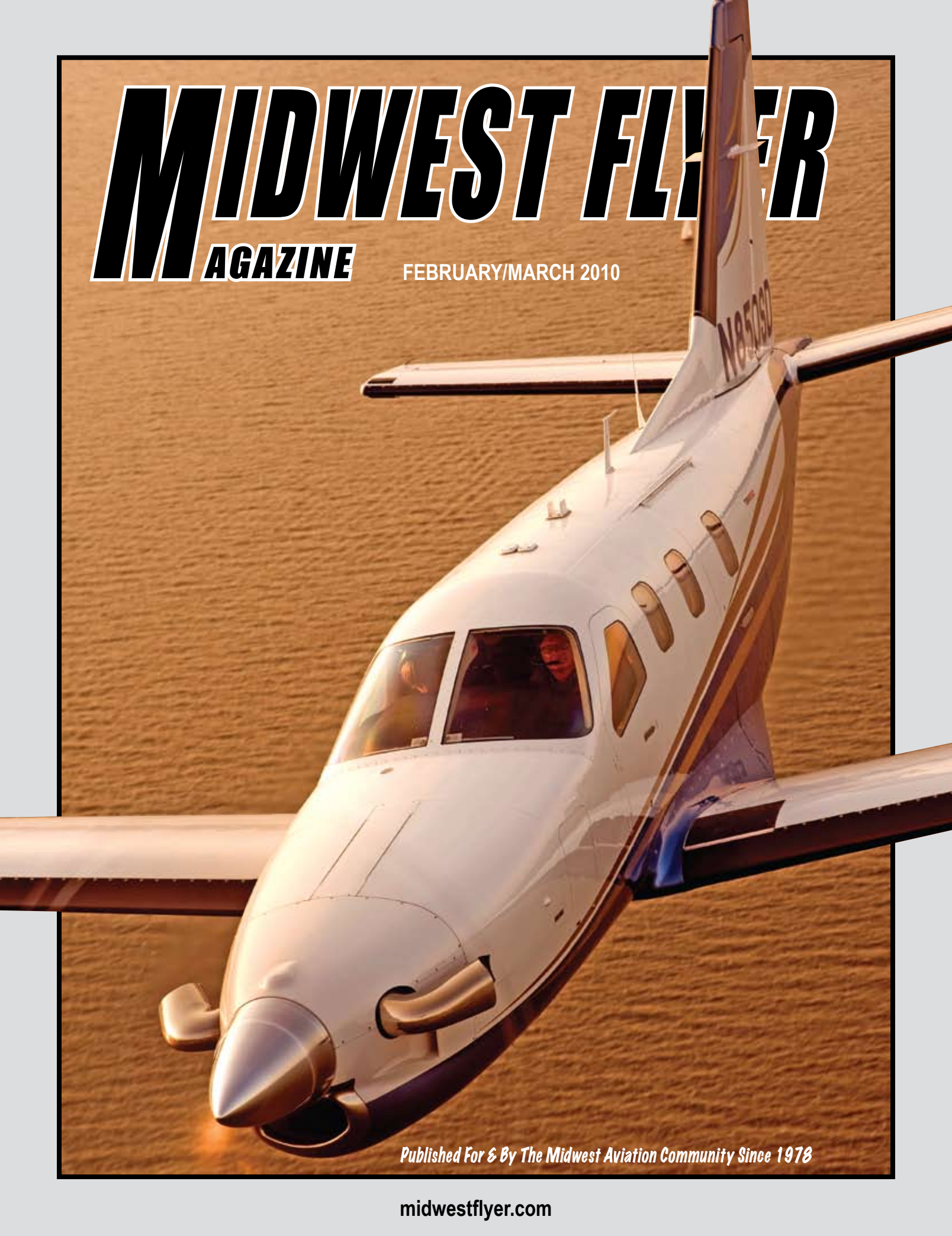


# MIDWEST FLYER

**MAGAZINE**

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## 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Living Legends of Aviation Honors Cruise, Aldrin & Russell

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIF. – The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Living Legends of Aviation Awards Program honored pilot/actor Tom Cruise for his starring role in the motion picture “Top Gun” at ceremonies held January 22 at the Beverly Hilton. Fellow pilot/actor, John Travolta, presented the “Top Aviation Inspiration & Patriotism Award” to Cruise. Top Gun, the highest grossing aviation movie of all time, has inspired generations of young pilots and patriotism among many Americans of all ages. Cruise is an accomplished aerobatic pilot, and owns several airplanes, including a P-51 Mustang – an airplane he so admired as a kid growing up.

Apollo 11 astronaut, Dr. Buzz Aldrin, received the “First Out of This World Landing and Take-Off Award,” which John Travolta also presented. Aldrin’s father served as an aide to Billy Mitchell, the father of the U.S. Air Force.

Other award recipients included Preston Henne of General Dynamics receiving the “Aviation Industry Leader of the Year;” Elon Musk, PayPal founder, and founder and Chairman and CEO of Space Exploration Technologies

(SpaceX), which was recently awarded a multi-billion dollar contract with the U.S. Government to develop and build space launch vehicles for NASA to replace the retiring space shuttles. Musk received the “Aviation Entrepreneur of the Year” Award; and Joe Clark, founder of JetAir, received the “Lifetime Aviation Entrepreneur” Award. In 1991, Clark and Dennis Washington founded Aviation Partners, inventing and developing blended winglets.

Kermit Weeks received the “Bob Hoover Freedom of Flight Award” for building his Fantasy of Flight Museum in Polk City, Fla., the largest private collection of vintage aircraft in the world, with over 140 aircraft.

Pilot/actor, Kurt Russell, received the “Aviation Mentor Award” for mentoring many pilots within and outside of the entertainment industry.

The event is produced by the Kiddie Hawk Air Academy, a non-profit 501(c)(3) qualified organization. Kiddie Hawk introduces kids ages 5 thru 11 to flight with the Kiddie Hawk Trainer. □

### Flying Without Your Plane

by Karen Workman

I will never again have to choose between flying my plane on vacation, or being flown on a jumbo jet to an exciting destination. I learned I can do both, or put another way, I learned how to fly without my plane.

It’s simple, really. You pick a vacation spot that you would love to see, then book a commercial flight there. Yes, that’s right: you buy a ticket and let someone else fly the plane. Your commercial flight will take only a matter of hours, rather than the full day or more to reach your personal paradise. Once you are checked into your hotel, go to the nearest fixed base operation or flight school. Tell the nice people there that you are from out of town and want to rent one of their planes. Most rentals require a check out flight with an instructor. That check out requirement can also be viewed as an opportunity to see the local area in the left seat of a small plane with a personal tour guide sitting

right next to you.

I’m not suggesting any deception here. There is no reason you shouldn’t be up front with the fixed base operation or flight school. Tell them whether or not you expect to rent from them again. The instructor will usually appreciate the opportunity for a fun flight, as much as you.

I discovered this great little trick while visiting my sister in California. While she was sleeping one afternoon, I slipped out to the Hanford Municipal Airport. Hanford is in the fertile valley known as “America’s fruit basket,” and is the hometown of one of my favorite singers, Steve Perry of Journey.

It was an adventure just finding the airport in my sister’s early model economy car that wanted to quit whenever the gas pedal was released. The airport was tucked behind vacant fairgrounds at the end of a dusty road on the far side of town. I told the young man tending the desk at the fixed base operation that I wanted to fly one of their planes

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### DESTINATIONS

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## MIA Hunters Seek Adventurers To Help Verify Crash Sites

**M**idwest Flyer Magazine was the first to report three successful expeditions to Papua New Guinea by MIA HUNTERS organization headquartered in Randolph, Minnesota (see October/November 2007 issue).

At that time, they discovered 12 previously undiscovered crash sites of WWII warbirds. The U.S. Army's recovery group in Hawaii followed with recovery of remains.

For May 2010, the MIA HUNTERS have now upped the ante, funding 10 native trackers for 20 months to find more undiscovered crash sites in dense jungle territory, much of which has not been previously visited by white people. Reporting monthly with supporting photographic evidence, over 40 new crash sites have already been mapped for the May 2010 missions. Four MIA Search Groups, each of 10 persons and each led by two mission leaders, include four ladies. Over 30 people

have already signed on leaving four vacant positions to be filled. While the upfront cost of \$8,500 plus \$3,000 airfare is a major consideration, all but the airfare is tax deductible as MIA HUNTERS is a registered Minnesota charity.

Organized and led by Bryan Moon, with 24 search missions of experience around the world, no mission member has ever been lost or left behind.

Each group will be taken by boat, canoe or bus to a jungle base-camp from which daily sorties to the crash sites will be made. Accommodation will be in tents with a camp cook and staff in attendance. A complete briefing will be given in advance and all arrangements including travel, hotels, ground transportation, trackers and guides plus visas, food and jungle supplies are all included in the price.

The 2010 missions are being promoted as the biggest search for MIAs by civilians seems reasonable given the number of missing aircraft

already discovered.

*"The lifelong practice by civilians and the Army of responding to a crash site report and sending search teams all over the world to look for one site at a time, is archaic," says Moon. "Our practice does not wait for a report to come in. We plan and organize massive searches of an area in which many lost aircraft and their crews are yet to be found before sending a search group to authenticate and GPS the site locations for follow-up by U.S. Army professional retrieval personnel."*

Their current example is Papua New Guinea where there are still hundreds of lost WWII aircraft and their crews still undiscovered. With an objective of a minimum of 60 sites, plus 20 they have already discovered, is achieved, the total of 80 discoveries will be unprecedented and serve, as a model for more effective MIA search and recoveries in the future.

For additional information or to reserve a position on the recovery team, contact Bryan Moon at 507-263-7050, or via email at [bryanmoon@bevcomm.net](mailto:bryanmoon@bevcomm.net). □

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*Aviation is proof that given, the will,  
we have the capacity to achieve the impossible.*

*Edward Vernon Rickenbacker*

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### **DESTINATIONS FROM PAGE 55**

for a little sightseeing tour of the area. He said I needed to fly one-half hour with one of their instructors before they would hand over the plane to me for solo flight. No problem, I thought. I would ask the instructor what there was worth seeing.

The instructor who would fly with me walked into the small lobby while I was still talking at the counter. He asked me a little about my background and purpose for the flight. I showed him my logbook. He saw that all of my 100-plus hours have been in the Midwest. "I grew up in California, though," I explained. "I've seen every corner of the state by a car. I want to

see it by air."

After filling out some paperwork and renting a headset, I had an airplane and a personal tour guide. The instructor ended up taking me to some of his favorite places in the area.

Don't get me wrong. There are times when flying my plane is the whole purpose of the vacation and the destination is just an excuse. My husband is a pilot, too, and we love to fly together. One wonderfully memorable vacation of ours started with no destination in mind. We took a week off work and planned to fly wherever the weather was best. We zig-zagged across the country, visiting friends, family, a national monument

and a few obscure towns off the beaten sky way. It is great fun to be a nomad with an airplane; I highly recommend it.

When time or money keep you from flying your own plane across the country, though, buy a cheap ticket on a big jet, and plan to fly upon arrival. The professionals can get you to and from your destination in a matter of hours, giving you more time to see your destination.

*EDITOR'S NOTE:* Karen Workman is an instrument rated Private Pilot. She lives in Northfield, Minnesota with her husband, Eric, who is also a pilot. □