



ALLEN SILVER
COLUMNS / ASK ALLEN

Dazzling Down Under

MY COLUMN THIS MONTH will take you to Australia, where I am happy to say aerobatic flying is alive and well. I first must thank a few individuals for making this happen. It all started with an e-mail to editor Reggie Paulk, who helped me make the necessary contacts in Australia. With the help of my girlfriend, Marilyn, we made plans for what turned out to be a spectacular 15-day trip.

When local flying clubs heard we were planning a holiday in their part of the country, they jumped at the chance of having me dazzle them with my brilliance and baffle them with my BS.

Special thanks go to Anthony Crichton-Browne, an aerobatic pilot, from the Sydney area. Not only did he, his wife, and friends wine and dine us at some very Aussie locations, but also he arranged for the use of the training room at the Red Baron Flight Training School. It is located at the Bankstown Airport near Sydney and is considered the premier training facility in the area. They may be a small group (see photo 1), but they welcomed me with enthusiasm.

After that, we were off to the Gold Coast and the Brisbane area. Allen Buckley organized my presentation at Heck Field on the outskirts of Brisbane, with the help of Steve Hudson, president of the Queensland Sports Flying Club. Allen and his wife, Fran, were kind enough to put us up for several days in their lovely home and treated us royally.

I met Allen at Sun 'n Fun Fly-In at Lakeland, Florida, several years ago, when he attended one of my bailout seminars. He is almost finished rebuilding one of only two flyable Marchetti SF-260s in Australia. When Allen was in the United States I gave him the opportunity to fly the Marchetti that I've been flying for the past seven years. It was his first experience flying a Marchetti. I also sent him home with a treasure trove of manuals and drawings that he didn't have to help with his restoration project. We soon became good friends and often communicate via the Internet.

At the time of my presentation, people were still battling floodwaters that inundated the Brisbane area, but they managed to come out anyway. I would like to think they came out just to hear me speak, but the delicious "barbie" that preceded my presentation was probably the main motivator (see photo 2). More than 60 people came out on a weekday after work to hear my presentation (see photo 3). Many drove a long way, in rainy weather, to attend.

Jason King, president of the Gold Coast Flying Club, presented me with a club shirt and cap that I proudly wear (see photo 4). I must also thank Jason's 14-year-old son, Alex, an up-and-coming pilot himself, for coming to my rescue when the computer started acting up. Every audience should have a young person in attendance who's willing to step up, just in case the computer equipment fails at a critical moment!

At this point you are no doubt asking, "What does all this have to do with safety and answering my parachute questions?" The lesson to be learned is that these pilots went out of their way and made a deliberate effort, in questionable weather, to attend a bailout seminar. *Safety doesn't happen by accident.* You must "Practice, practice, and practice" to make it a part of your flying routine.

I encourage you, if no safety seminars are scheduled in your area, to set one up. My seminars are free (all I ask is that my travel expenses are covered), yet few groups take advantage of them. Unfortunately, maybe because of human nature, many people are reactive instead of proactive and only schedule a safety seminar after an accident occurs. Learn from our friends down under and take a proactive approach to safety.

I don't want to leave this column without giving you at least one practical, real-world tip about your parachute. When I travel to give safety seminars, I quite

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often find parachutes so far out of adjustment that the person wearing it would have fallen out of the harness if he or she had to deploy the parachute. This is also true of many of the parachutes I receive, in my shop, from first-time customers.

Unfortunately, many parachute riggers at the local sky diving place are only familiar with sky diving parachutes. Sky diving harnesses are typically custom-made and have few, if any, adjustments. The rigger who packs your parachute may not even realize that your harness, in

most cases, must be adjusted and sized to fit you properly. It may be so far out of adjustment that you could accidentally fall out of it. *You* are responsible for making sure your parachute rigger is familiar with the type of parachute you own, wear, and trust your life to. If it doesn't seem to fit right, talk to them about it. If you're still in doubt, call or e-mail me. Often pilots e-mail me photos of themselves wearing their parachute, so I can see what's going on. I always have time to help ensure that you know how to properly adjust and wear your parachute. You can also call the manufacturer for assistance. The point is that there are plenty of resources available. Remember, you will not fall out of a properly adjusted harness. My question to you is this: Is your harness adjusted properly? If you have to bail out, it's already a bad day; don't make it worse!

I hope to see many of you at Sun 'n Fun. I'll be giving my seminar on "Emergency Bailout Procedures & Survival Equipment for Pilots" on Saturday April 2 at 12:05 p.m. in Forum Tent 4. Bring your lunch and join me. I hope to meet many of you there. "Good day, Mate," fly safely, and enjoy the upcoming flying season. **IAC**



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