

AROUND THE PATCH

We sample some nifty, unusual aircraft.

By Dave Martin

A visit by Velocity's Duane Swing and travel to the Northwest EAA Fly-in in Arlington, Washington, allowed brief aerial encounters in some interesting sport aircraft during the last month.

Swing was on tour in his company's latest, the Velocity XL, which is a larger, higher-power version of the gullwing-door Velocity Elite that Managing Editor Keith Beveridge and I flew to Oshkosh '94. Powered by a Lycoming IO-540 and offering inches more cabin room in each direction, the XL flies like the Elite but faster (cruising close to 230 mph) and guarantees even more comfort for really big people. Useful load is 1100 pounds. You'd like it.

The mid-July Arlington fly-in is always a favorite if the weather cooperates, which it did Friday through Sunday after a wet opening two days. Saturday's attendance was an all-time one-day record.

I accepted invitations to try my hand at three interesting aircraft including the new Six Chuter SR-7 powered parachute commanded by instructor Steve Rozier. Our constant-26-mph flight on a gorgeous still-air morning included finding our own wake in 360° turns and loose formation with other powerchuters. You need professional instruction to fly these simple fun



Duane Swing and the Velocity Elite XL



Steve Rozier and the Skye Rider SR-7.

machines, but not much.

Next was a flight with nationally known gyroplane instructor Duane Hunn in an RAF 2000 gyro powered by a 130-hp Subaru Legacy engine. I'd not flown a gyro in several years, but after Duane demonstrated a takeoff and some maneuvers, I felt at home once again and made a takeoff and two landings. Actually, landings in a gyro are easier than in any airplane I've ever flown.

Another brightly painted RAF 2000 was the center of Jack E. Watson's new "Hawk vs. Chicken Hawk" act introduced at Arlington: Jack in his out-

geous-paint Yak 55 spars or performs airborne ballet with RAF President Dan Haseloh in the equally bright RAF 2000 *Chicken Hawk*. Watch next year's airshow schedules for this two-some—which may become a threesome with the addition of another RAF 2000.

Finally, an early morning flight in the new taildragger version of the Murphy Aircraft SR 2500 shows what you can do with a lot of power (an O-540) and a big airplane: haul a heck of a lot in style. Writer Ken Armstrong and I swapped seats in the air to sample the big bird as company pilot Robin Dyck kept his seat. Twenty-two squared power yielded 130 knots and a solid, almost heavy control feel, which is fine for its intended life in the back country with lots of weight aboard. This airplane would make a heck of a float-plane, and that's in the works.

For more details on Arlington '97, see Ron Wanttaja's report in the January issue. Be patient.

Lost in Cyberspace

Live by the electron. Die by the electron. An Internet glitch caused a delay in receiving Jeff Dunham's final episode in his series on building a RotorWay International 162F kit helicopter. He's hovering his heli! Look for the conclusion of his series next month. **KP**



Chicken Hawk (Dan Haseloh, left) vs. Hawk (Jack E. Watson).



Robin Dyck and the Murphy SR 2500 taildragger.