

THE ST. AUGUSTINE
RECORD

MONDAY DECEMBER 13, 2004

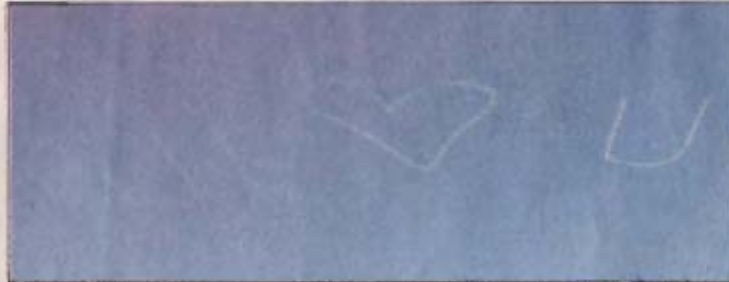
SINCE 1894

Aviators and others honor their friend and mentor, Jim Holland



FORMER ACROBATIC PILOT JIM HOLLAND, 87, receives the plaque representing his induction into the International Council of Air Shows Foundation Hall of Fame from skywriter Steve Oliver, as one of Holland's former students, Mark Marsh and his son Jonathan Marsh, 17, also a pilot, look on during a gathering honoring Holland at the Fly-By Café on Sunday.

Thanks for the thrills



IN HONOR of former acrobatic pilot Jim Holland, 'We love u Jim' is spelled out above St. Augustine Airport by skywriter Steve Oliver during a gathering Sunday honoring Holland's induction into the International Council of Air Shows Foundation Hall of Fame.

Some of the world's renowned acrobatic pilots stood on a balcony outside the St. Augustine/St. Johns County Airport Sunday to honor Jim Holland, a man they said touched their lives.

"He taught us all (to fly) really," said Roy Miller, of St. Augustine, who's known for walking on the wings of a plane as it flies. "If you learned it from Jim, you learned it right."

Earlier this month, Holland, 87, of St. Augustine, was inducted into the International Council of Air Shows Foundation Hall of Fame in Las Vegas. He lives in a nursing home after having a stroke about six years ago and was unable to attend the ceremony, so about 20 pilots and friends brought the celebration to him.

Men's eyes were rimmed with tears as they thanked Holland for all he's given to the sport of acrobatic flying.

"Nobody out of everybody we've ever seen did it better than he did," said acrobatic pilot Carl Pascarell, of Fruit Cove, who flew along side Holland in air shows.

Holland's career as a pilot began in 1937 and varies from flying in World War II, and being a crop duster and a flight instructor. He's lived in St. Augustine for 30 years, and in 1965 he and friend Ernie Moser began the Holland and Moser Flying Circus, which traveled the world performing death-defying stunts with airplanes.

"I guess you could say I'm an entertainer," Holland said. "It wasn't scared at all. I was never scared to fly."

One of Holland's well-known tricks is cutting a ribbon with his plane that's stretched between two poles only 15 feet above the ground.

"He did it lower than anybody else," Pascarell said. "He made it look easy. He was aggressive but smooth."

Later Holland flew with Ernie Moser's son Jim.

Jill Brennan, the late Jim Moser's daughter, said she remembers watching Holland and her father do tricks while the wings of their planes were chained together.

"It's amazing to see," she said.

PLEASE SEE PILOT/12A

**"NOBODY
out of everybody
we've ever seen
did it better than
he did."**

— CARL PASCARELL,
acrobatic pilot who
flew alongside Jim
Holland in air shows

Story by Kati Bexley, kati.bexley@staugustinerecord.com
Photos by Madelyn Troyanek madelyn.troyanek@staugustinerecord.com

PILOT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

"When they flew it was almost like dancing in the air. They choreographed their shows to music."

At Sunday's ceremony, Holland's eyes widened and his mouth was agape as Steve Oliver of the Pepsi Aerial Entertainers team wrote, "We Love You Jim," in the air and Patty Wagstaff, the No. 1 woman's pilot in the world, did several tricks with her plane.

"She's brutal," said acrobatic pilot Mark Marsh,

whom Holland taught to fly. "It's a \$20,000 air show for free."

Wagstaff's plane began to fall toward the ground when she stalled her engine "just for affect," Marsh said.

Marsh passed along some of Holland's knowledge to his son Jonathan, 17, who has also become a pilot.

Jonathan hopes to be the next generation of acrobatic pilots, but he said no one can do it like Holland did.

"There are no acts like that anymore," he said. "Hopefully one day I'll be able to do that."