



The AMA History Project Presents: Biography of DAN LANDIS



Written by AMA Staff (Winter 2009); DL (04/2012); Reformatted by JS (08/2010, 06/2012)

The following was published in the Winter 2009 issue of Park Pilot magazine, an AMA publication, in the section titled The Other Side of the Tree Line.

Park Pilot Interviews Dan Landis, skilled competitor and park pilot who now flies RC under contract with the British military.

A long evaluation revealed that the people most qualified to pilot today's most advanced unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are AMA member RC hobbyists with extensive experience in advanced competition.

Dan Landis has flown RC competitively for almost two decades. Together with his father, Richard, they are a team that exemplifies sportsmanship and drive.

One of less than a half-dozen people who qualify, Dan is now flying overseas for his country. Military UAVs are giving our freedom fighters the edge over terrorism and they require Dan's skills as an RC competitor and park pilot to depart the aircraft from the top-secret site and bring it home safely.

Park Pilot: Hey, Dan! When and how did you get started in model flying?

Dan Landis: I started flying models when I was four. My father and his father had been flying models for many years, so I guess it runs in the family. I soloed my Dad's full-scale airplane on my 16th birthday.

Park Pilot: Do you fly in competitive events other than aerobatics?

Dan Landis: I have flown in all types of events, but my true passion is precision aerobatics. My job and time out of the country make it challenging to schedule events; sometimes I have to leave with only a day's notice. I keep my bag packed so I'm good to head to the airport and wherever I am needed.

Park Pilot: Has flying park models helped you with your current job?

Dan Landis: Yes, my current job and my previous job as a full-scale flight instructor, as well. As a flight instructor, I used park models to demonstrate what I wanted my students to do with the full-scale airplane. The students were able to visualize what the aircraft should look like when a maneuver was done correctly, as well as what would occur if it was incorrectly done. I found that it was easier for them to learn from their mistakes when they could actually see what was happening.

Park Pilot: You're often out of the country. How often do you practice?

Dan Landis: This year, I was home for a month and a half before the Nats, and flying at least six to ten flights every day. The few times I was away, I took small park flyers with me to practice. I try to fly whether it is warm or cold. Practice is important, so I try to make the best of it.

Park Pilot: How different is flying a UAV than a park flyer?

Dan Landis: The box for the UAV is very similar to the transmitters RC pilots use, but it does not have an antenna. Instead, it has a large cable that connects it to the computer system. The sticks perform the same functions as an RC transmitter.

The UAV requires about 1,500 feet for a takeoff or landing. The UAV has just about enough power to fly, which is another difference, as a park flyer has a great power-to-weight ratio that will allow you to get out of just about any troublesome situation. That option is totally lacking with the UAV, and you need to snag the cable with your tail hook to stop after landing.

Park Pilot: How's the flying outside of the States?

Dan Landis: I am very fortunate to be able to fly RC in different countries. Some of the airplanes and rules are different, but basically, things are the same. I have been invited to fly all over the world, and always with borrowed airplanes. No matter where you are, RC fliers are a great bunch, and always interested in learning how things are done in the U.S. Everyone has always been very gracious, and invited me to fly with them anytime I am in the area.

Park Pilot: Do you have any advice for RC pilots who want to take their flying skills to the next level?

Dan Landis: Find the top fliers in your area, and ask for help with new maneuvers or perfecting those you already know. You can always learn something, no matter how much experience you have.

Park Pilot: Thanks for helping our country, Dan.

Dan Landis: I had a great time, and hope everyone enjoys reading this.

The following was published on the AMA website at

<http://amablog.modelaircraft.org/amayouth/2012/04/19/ama-youth-ambassador-dan-landis/> on the AMA Youth blog from April 19, 2012.

AMA Youth Ambassador Dan Landis

I am currently 28 and have been around and loved aviation for as long as I can remember. My father took me for my first flight in his Cessna 182 when I was six months old. From that point on, I was flying with him and my grandfather, who flew B-29s during World War II.

Any time Dad would go flying, I would join him and he taught me how to fly. By age 6, I had soloed with RC airplanes and had been flying by myself with Dad just standing next to me. From there, I began to compete in Precision Aerobatics when I was approximately 12, going to the Nats and flying in Intermediate my first time there. I had a great time and have been back nearly

every year since.

I am now flying F3A and am having a great time. I got my private pilot's license on my 17th birthday, and then went to school to get all of my ratings so that I could fly for the airlines. After school, I became a flight instructor to build flight time so I could work for one of the airlines, but one day I got a phone call from Chip Hyde asking if I would be interested in flying UAVs with him. It sounded interesting and he had the company call me and it went from there. I was deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, flying large UAVs for five years and had a great time and really enjoyed helping the troops.



I was able to work it in to make it to the Nats. Most of the time, I had some great coaching from Chip while flying airplanes that he has designed for the past seven or eight years.



I just get a new job and I love every minute of it. I am working at Hobbico as the marketing outreach manager. I get to travel to several events and trade shows, as well as give presentations and work with our research and development team on new products.

I would like to thank my mom and dad and my sister, Lisa, grandparents, Chip, Futaba, Hobbico, and Castle Creations for all their help and support.

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