

NATSNEWS



CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF COMPETITION

July 20

Indoor Free Flight | Rantoul, Illinois



Mike Kirda's 54-inch Comet Taylorcraft takes flight.

INDOOR FREE FLIGHT

Text and photos by Mike Kirda

First of all, I'd like to acknowledge Bud Layne for leading the charge to bring the Indoor Nats to Rantoul, Illinois. His willingness to listen to my (many?) crazy ideas about how to make the hangar better led directly to a lot of work on the part of many volunteers. Having a lift for the Nats increased the workload, however, the end result is worth it. A gap was discovered above the hangar doors—imagine stuffing insulation along 200 feet of hangar doors.

Secondly, I have to call out Rey Mazzocco for giving up a lot of his practice time. While I was up on the lift plugging holes, he was patiently making up panels to size and cheering me on. As the holes got plugged, I could feel the air movement at the top lessen. When the final nearly 4-foot x 4-foot panel was inserted, the “breeze” was gone. The day is hot and humid—very sticky inside with no drift or turbulence to speak of.

For setup day, people came as early as 7 a.m. By mid-morning, tables and chairs arrived and were set up. Portapotties arrived around noon. The helium tanks did not arrive until later on in the afternoon, but there seemed to be little demand for balloons.

There are three carbon-fiber poles leaned up against the wall right next to where I am typing. Much of this was a blur as people came and went. We got to meet old friends and make new ones.

Many pulled out various types of models and started flying. Gliders, Intermediate Stick, F1D, No-Cal models, EZ-B—all were up and getting trimmed. Only one Scale model was in evidence: one large-size Taylorcraft. I take back the “lack of turbulence” comment. *That* left some turbulence in its wake!

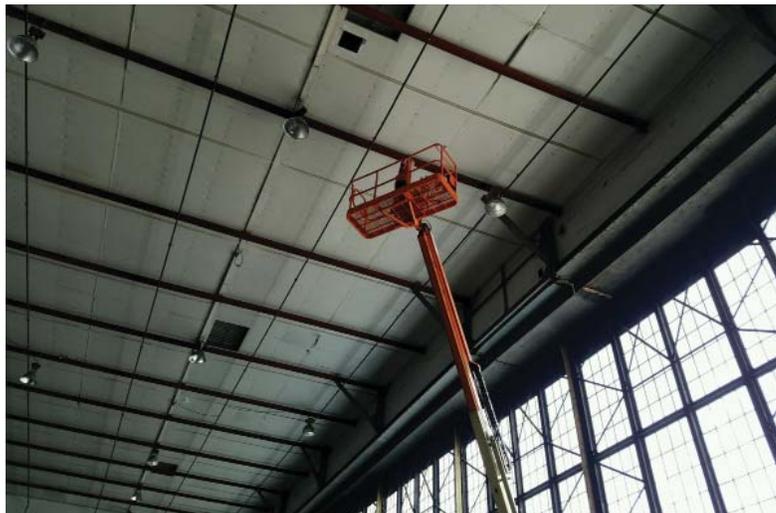
Some site information:

- Height to insulation panels: 44 feet, 4 inches
- Red beam on the ceiling is a 6 feet x 6 feet 'L' beam.
- The gap between the insulation panels and the top of the red beam is about 5 inches.
- The sprinkler pipe is 2 inches and it is 12 inches from the top of the pipe to the insulation panels.
- The lights hang down at various heights; I believe the range is roughly 36 to 48 inches from the top.

I'm looking forward to starting the competition today! 🚀



Above and Below: The lights hang from the ceiling at various heights.



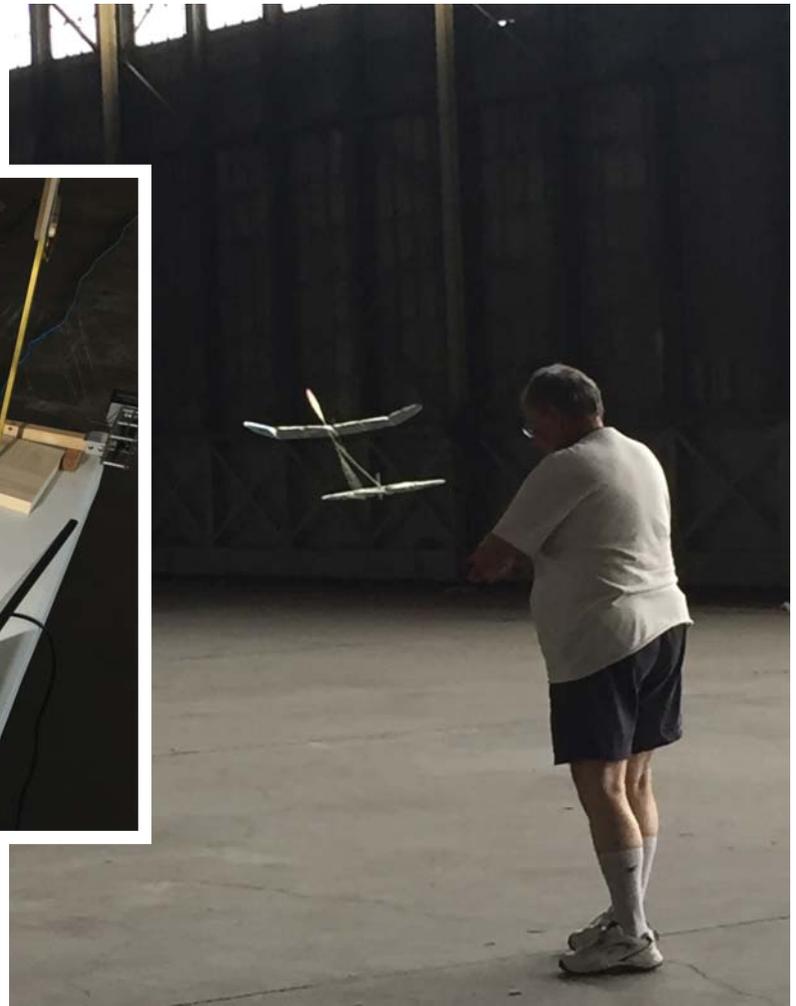
The lift provided by Bud Layne for sealing the ceiling and difficult aircraft retrievals.



Heading up to patch a hole in the ceiling.



Rey Mazzocco working on his VP for F1D.



Larry Louka launching his Intermediate Stick aircraft.

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