

The Aero Club of  
Northern California

1994 Award Winner

# Frank L. Christensen



# Christen Eagle II



*Known throughout the world as the finest kit-built aerobatic aircraft, the Christen Eagle II combines high-performance design with kit construction excellence.*

*The Eagle is a biplane of perfectly classical construction, with a wing structure of built-up wooden ribs and spars, welded steel fuselage and empennage and a mixed covering of fabric and removable aluminum panels.*

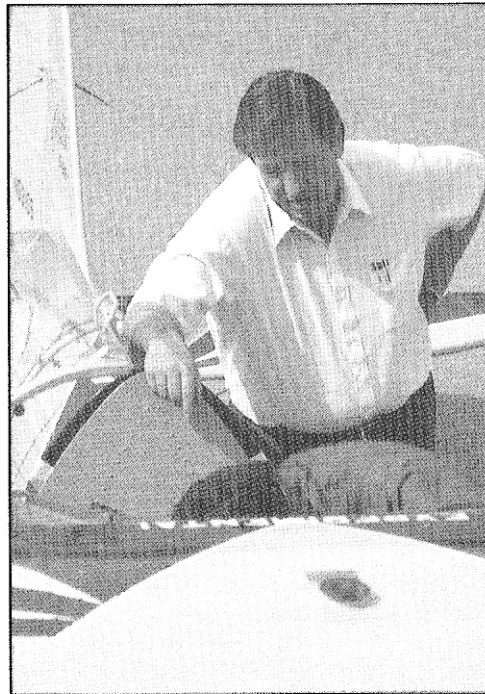
# Frank L. Christensen

FRANK CHRISTENSEN was born in 1937 and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was an accomplished athlete in football and gymnastics. Frank learned to fly at age 16. In 1955, he moved to Palo Alto, California to attend Stanford University and continue his athletic and flying activities. He graduated from Stanford in 1960 majoring in economics and industrial engineering.

In the late 1950's, Frank became fascinated with the miniaturization involved in the semi-conductor business, particularly the ultra-miniature tools needed to make things like integrated circuits. He began a small business during his junior year manufacturing miniature tools and the machinery that would use them. He founded Tempress Industries, Inc. which became the world's foremost manufacturer of miniature tools and production machinery for the semi-conductor and microelectronics industries. The venture (Tempress) was highly successful and corporate aircraft took their place in the company. One of his early aircraft was the Cavalier (a remanufactured P-51). But it was the Pitts Special that really peaked his interest in aerobatics and in which developed his aerobatic skills to national and international competition levels. In 1969, his first year of aerobatic competition, he became the "National Aerobatic Champion". In 1972, he

managed the U.S. aerobatic team in France for the world championships.

It was around this time that he sold Tempress. He "retired" to a piece of property just east of Hollister, CA, near the base of a range of mountains and named the



place the "Lightning Tree Ranch." He loafed for a time but then got the itch for a drill press, a lathe and to have a drawing board. Then he decided to get back in the manufacturing business. He had developed several important systems for aerobatic aircraft, including the Christen 801 inverted oil system which is the standard for Lycoming engine equipped aerobatic aircraft. He also developed the Kan aerobatic seat belt system, and a manual fuel pump system. The development of these safety and performance related systems and

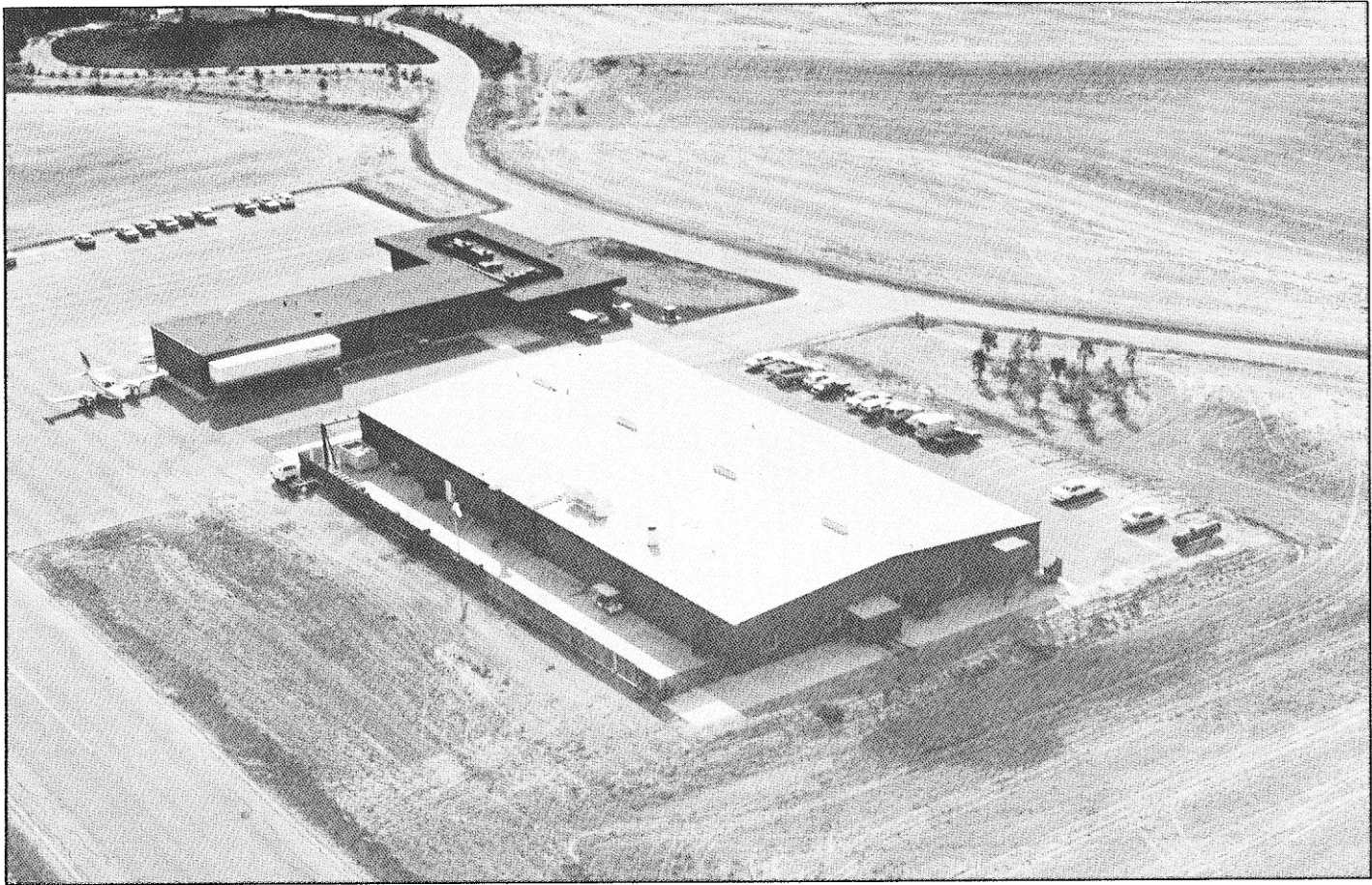
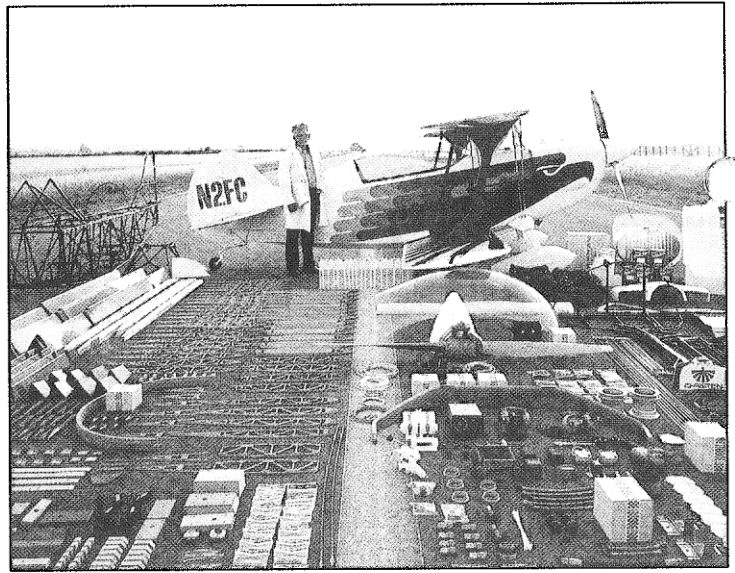
his commitment to excellence has taken sport aviation to a new plateau.

In 1975, he developed the Christen Eagle II aircraft, a competition-class aerobatic aircraft in a complete kit construction form which provided every part of the aircraft from wing ribs to logbooks and allowed construction by inexperienced aircraft homebuilders. The kit featured a 25-volume set of highly detailed and illustrated aircraft construction manuals. In the period from 1982 to 1991, he acquired and managed Pitts Aerobatics, the world's foremost manufacturer of FAA-certified competition-class aerobatic aircraft. The company combined with Christen Industries and developed the Christen Husky utility aircraft, the first all-new FAA-certificated light aircraft to be produced in many years.

Frank Christensen is the recipient of many awards, among them, the WESCON Award of Merit for Industrial Design, EAA Aviation Foundation Award for Services and Dedication to Aviation, EAA Aviation Foundation Award for Aviation Leadership. He has been an active pilot since 1953 with instrument and multi-engine ratings and 5,000 hours flight time. He now resides in Jackson Hole, Wyoming with his wife of 36 years. Since 1992, he has been an aviation and software consultant. He has four children and nine grandchildren.



*As a kit-built aircraft, the Christen Eagle II is supplied in a series of complete parts kits with highly detailed instructions which permit construction by inexperienced homebuilders. All required parts and materials are supplied, and most parts are formed or preassembled at the Christen factory to simplify home-builder construction. All weldments, such as fuselage and tail surfaces, are supplied in completely finished and painted form, and all molded fiberglass parts, such as cowlings and fairings are prefabricated using precision factory molds. Kits include many special tools, assembly jigs, and parts to ensure simple and efficient construction.*



*Christensen Industries near Hollister, CA.*

*The smaller of the two buildings contained the offices and shipping department. The larger one is where the Eagle kits were manufactured.*

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# Twelfth Annual Awards Presentation

The Aero Club of Northern California

April 8, 1994

San Jose, California

Welcome and Introduction ..... Pat Fox  
Invocation ..... Marily Mora

## DINNER

Introduction of 1994 Officers and Board Members ..... Pat Fox

- Special Recognitions

Scholarship Awards

- Danielle Theriault - San Jose State University ..... Scott Yelich
- Jeremy Gates - College of San Mateo ..... Steve Sullivan

Guest Speaker

- Frank L. Christensen ..... Jerry Bennett

Crystal Eagle Award Presentation ..... Barbara Murren

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## The Crystal Eagle Award

The Crystal Eagle Award is presented annually by the Aero Club of Northern California to recognize an individual whose accomplishments have significantly contributed to the advancement of aviation or space technology.

### The Crystal Eagle:

#### A distinctive work of art

The Crystal Eagle Award is a unique work of art crystal handcrafted in Sweden.

It is fitting that the eagle should be the symbol for the Aero Club's annual award. The North American eagle is recognized as a bird possessing great strength, natural grace, keenness of vision and power in flight. The eagle has been used by man to identify with flying since its inception to our current successes in space.

The crystal reflects the medium of flight -- transparent, yet ever present.

The Crystal Eagle is mounted on a California redwood base, unique to Northern California.

In its natural state redwood has unusual durability, commensurate with the recipients of this coveted award.

#### Crystal Eagle Award Winners

- 1983: General James "Jimmy" Doolittle  
1984: Brigadier General Charles E. "Chuck" Yeager  
1985: Stanley Hiller, Jr.  
1986: William "Bill" Lear, Sr.  
1987: James M. Nissen  
1988: Anthony W. "Tony" LeVier  
1989: Elbert "Burt" L. Rutan  
1990: George S. Cooper  
1991: Allen E. Paulson  
1992: Jeana Yeager  
1993: Robert T. Jones



## Our Special Thanks to:

Hillis Printing/*Chuck Hillis*  
Hugh Center Trust/*Art Lund*  
Sixteen Design/*Bill & Kim Pfahnl*  
Student AAAE Chapter - *SJSU*

San Jose International Airport (SJC)

- *Keith Freitas*
- *Rob Benstein*
- *John Aitken*
- *Jane Tolentino*

Special Recognition

- *Shirley Ibay*

The Aero Club of Northern California was formed to promote those activities which advance aviation and aerospace within Northern California.

We are a chapter of our parent organization, the National Aeronautic Association (NAA), which having been founded in 1905 as the Aero Club of America is the oldest independent, non-profit aviation organization in the United States, and the sole U.S. representative to the Federation Aeronautique International (FAI).

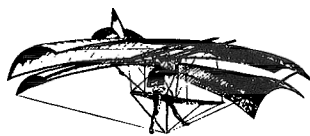
So central to aviation was the Aero Club that it issued all pilot licenses in the United States

until 1926. The first five pilot licenses issued by the Aero Club were as follows: 1) Glen H. Curtiss, 2) Lt. Frank P. Lahm, 3) Louis Paulham, 4) Orville Wright, and 5) Wilbur Wright. All other pilot licenses issued in the United States subsequent to these five were until 1926 issued by the Aero Club of America.

We embrace the goals of our parent organization in our efforts to support a vigorous aviation and space program for students at all levels of learning, and to recognize and honor those who make outstanding contributions to the advancement of aviation and space flight.

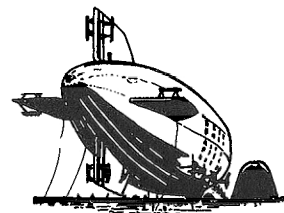
## About our logo ...

Incorporated in the logo of The Aero Club of Northern California are some of the most significant contributions the Northern California area has made to the art and science of flight.



*Montgomery Flight - 1904*

Often referred to as "The Father of Basic Flying" Dr. John Montgomery was a true aviation pioneer. San Jose was the site of many of his historic achievements. Alexander Graham Bell noted that, "All subsequent attempts in aviation must begin with the Montgomery Machine."



*Moffett Field 1933*

Dedicated April 12, 1933, Moffett Field until recently was the United States guardian of the Pacific. It continues to be a major aviation facility supporting significant military and non-military operations.



*China Clipper - 1936*

Lifting from San Francisco Bay waters on November 22, 1935, the Clipper became the first airplane to fly the Pacific non-stop. Cutting over 15 days off the best surface time from San Francisco to Manila, it led to the elimination of the barriers of space and time.



*NASA Ames Research Center - 1940*

Northern California's continued contributions to involvement in our quest for our ultimate destiny is assured by the ongoing advancements in aerospace science and technology at NASA's Ames Research Center.