

VSA HONORS GARY KEMP

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

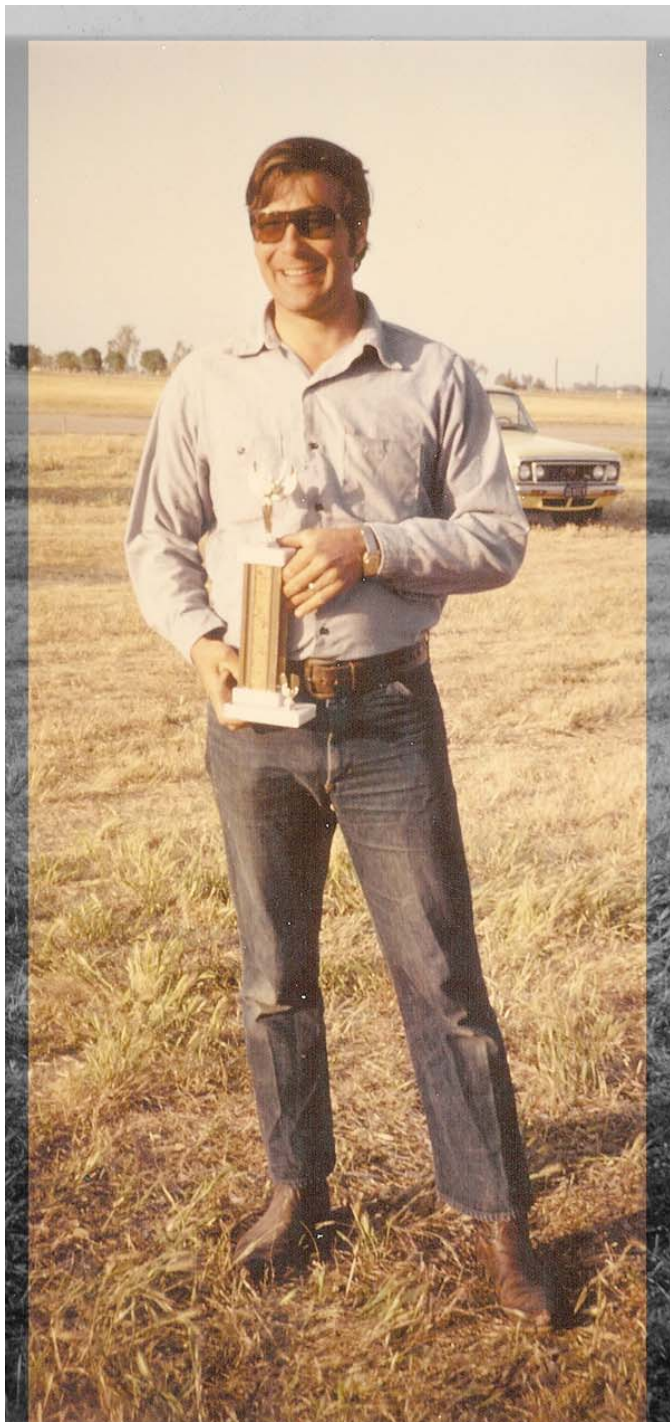
2006 Leaving the soaring racing circuit.

- 2001 U.S. Team Captain for the World Soaring Championships in South Africa. This event held every two years in different parts of the world.
- 1994 Flew the first 1000k flight in the State of Utah in a Pegasus with Art Clark behind him 30 minutes later in an Open Jantar.
- 1991 Instrumental in setting up the Ameriglide Contest at Minden, working extensively with the County.
- 1990's One of the prime movers in establishing the Mount Shasta Soaring Club.
- 1989 Received PASCO Les Arnold Award
- 1985 As Contest Director of the Open Nationals, Gary called the longest task that has ever been called in a contest.
- 1982 Served as PASCO President for two terms, Circa 1982 to 1985.
- 1982 He pioneered soaring the Mendocino's.
- 1980's President of Chico Soaring
- 1970's Started the Annual spring soaring events at Central California Soaring Club. He won the first event!

Central California Soaring Club - Served as President during the early years.

Gary flew frequently at El Mirage, where all of the big time racing events were held.

1968 Gary's first solo, in Perris Valley, CA.



Gary Kemp wins 1st Place at the first Annual Spring Soaring event at Tulare, CA. Circa 1975. Photo provided by Gary Kemp.

Have Sailplane, Will Travel

BY TOM JUE



Gary Kemp next to his Schweizer 1-34

This photo was taken in April 1970 in El Mirage, CA. He owed this sailplane with three other pilots he later bought out. This sailplane was designed for the original standard class. It had Terminal Velocity Air brakes that you could not exceed when you pulled your spoilers up. They bought this sailplane from Fred Harris, a Schweizer dealer in Tehachapi, CA. Photo provided by Gary Kemp.

It was a hot summer day on the last Saturday of July at Williams, CA. when I met Gary Kemp for the first time. Throughout our discussions, it was quite evident that Gary was willing to travel with his sailplane anywhere and anytime. Just ask his family!

This reminded me of the 1957 black and white television series about an infamous gun slinger named Paladin. His business card read: Have Gun, Will Travel. It was portrayed by the actor Richard Boone. This provided the inspiration for this article's title.



First Solo

Gary completes his first solo flight on May, 26, 1968. His Gold Badge instructor Carl Jessop does the honors, cutting off his shirt. Photo provided by Gary Kemp

The more I got into this story, the more I began to realize that Gary Kemp is an icon. He is the epitome of one who had contributed to the sport with his heart and soul since the late sixties. Not only has he harvested all of its pleasures, he has also sown the seeds to keep the sport flourishing.

Gary's soaring career started when he first soloed in 1968 in Perris Valley Soaring, CA.

Shortly after this, he went after his first 300k record!

On his second attempt, at 1:30 p.m., he landed out about 40 miles near Mt. Palomar. There were cattle and horses all around him. Several cowboys rode up on horses to keep the cows away!

"Not only has he harvested all of its pleasures, he has also sown the seeds to keep the sport flourishing."



First Competition

The Western Regional Sports Class Competition was the first contest Gary Kemp entered at El Mirage. April 1970. Photo provided by Gary Kemp.

Gary walked down the road and saw several telephone booths, but as luck would have it, none of them worked! He had to hitch a ride back to Sailplane Enterprises in Perris, CA. The owner Don Slotten saw him approaching and asked him "where is my glider?" They did not retrieve the sailplane until 8:30 p.m.!

He said he later figured out what went wrong. He laughed as he told me. He was trying to "go over the ridge on the downwind side!"

Gary's ground crew consisted of his entire family, including pets! What was it like being this family? See the article titled "The Mad Pilot" by his son, Gary E. Kemp. This article is quite insightful.

Gary had a 2nd crash in the Schweizer 1-34 below Mammoth Mountain, a big ski resort in Southern California. He landed in a gravel preparation pit for highways. Gary's sailplane hit a big rock.

Irv Prue's advice to Gary

"You fly fine. When you get the last 10 feet down, you'll be just fine!"

Gary was so upset, that he told Irv Prue that "if I can't fly any better than that, I will have to quit." Irv considered this and replied: "You fly fine. When you get the last 10 feet down, you'll be just fine!"

I asked Gary who Irv Prue was. Gary thought for a moment and began to speak fondly of Irv. He told me that Irv designed a number of gliders, including the



Second Attempt at 300k

Gary Kemp's second attempt at 300k, trying to go over the ridge behind the sailplane on the downhill side! Circa April 1970. Photo provided by Gary Kemp.

Prue Standard and Super Standard. Irv and Ed Minghelli set several US records.

Annie Oakley vs. the UFO

In 1971, Gary started flying the Nationals. In the first one, the task called for 267 miles. He had never done this before. He didn't finish. Instead, he landed out in a farmer's field in Mansfield, North of Ephrata, WA.

He said the farmer's family invited him to dinner. In the meantime, his wife Nancy was driving all night trying to find him.

When she finally found him, she was tired and hungry. She hadn't stopped to eat. He said she was very upset when she finally found him, only to see him enjoying a nice a chicken dinner with the farmer!

Apparently Gary left out some details. His son's version is very different. This is the Annie Oakley vs. the UFO incident that his son refers to in his story "The Mad Pilot".

The Mad Pilot by Gary E. Kemp

See this hilarious article by Gary's son regarding their early days crewing for his father. It is reprinted in this newsletter.

In 1972, Gary flew in the Nationals held in Marfa, TX. Gary finished 38 out of 62. He was flying the



First Gold Distance Attempt

Nancy Kemp (right) and a friend Chris (left). This was 40 miles south of Perris, CA from where Gary Kemp took off. Circa 1968. Photo provided by Gary Kemp.

only metal sailplane, the Schweizer 1-34. Everyone else had fiberglass!

I next showed Gary a picture black and white picture of this young kid and asked "who's this?" Gary smiled and said warmly, "that's John Seaborn."

He began telling me about his good friend. He said John was 13 years old when Gary met him and became his instructor. Apparently John's parents thought gliding lessons would help John with his schooling.



Instructing John Seaborn

Gary Kemp instructed John when he was 13 years old. Photo provided by Gary Kemp.



Summer Central California Soaring Camp
 Instructor Gary Kemp is in the back seat. This camp was in Springvale, CA. Circa 1975. Photo by John Seaborn.

Little did John’s parents nor Gary for that matter, would know that years later this young man would become not only a very successful businessman, but also one of the premier competition glider pilots in the country.

John Seaborn started flying in high school. His first sailplane was a BG-12. After leaving soaring to focus on business, John later re-entered the sport. He presently flies a Ventus. He placed 3rd at the 15-Meter Nationals Contest held at Siskiyou, CA in July 2006. John runs the web site for the US Team and is a member of the US Team Committee (see WWW.SSA.ORG/USTEAM).

“Flying with the Big Guns”

In 1970’s, Gary spoke about the starting the Annual Spring Soaring Event in Tulare, CA, located half way between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Gary also won its first event!

Also during this decade of the 70’s, Gary flew quite a bit at El Mirage, where all the big time racing events were held at the time with big guns like Gus Briegleb, Paul Bikle, Ed Butts, Danny Pierson, Bill Ivans, Einer Enevoldson, Helen Dick, Bertha Ryan and others of similar abilities.



Towing a Sailplane in the late 1960’s
 This was in Valley Center, a little town north of Escondido. Photo provided by Gary Kemp.

I am fairly new to the sport and embarrassingly did not recognize any of the “big guns.” Gary saw my puzzled look and enlightened me on a couple of the names. He thought fondly as he reflected back in the good ole days.

Gus Briegleb and his family ran the El Mirage Airport, which he started back in 1946. He developed the BG-12 glider kit, a wooden glider. It was a big success. His two sons Ross and Kenny were well known competition pilots in 1960's and 1970's.

Gary had fond memories of the BG16, a semi-reclining wooden glider that Gus built from scratch. Although Gus' son Ross flew it successfully in races, it never went into production. Gus passed away in 2002.

Einer Envoldson is involved in the Perlan Project. He is the co-pilot for US adventurer and millionaire Steve Fossett. Together, they have twice achieved altitudes of over 40,000 feet. Steve Fossett and Einar Enevoldson and the rest of the Perlan Team are preparing for the 2006 season in El Calafate, Argentina.

President of PASCO

In the 1980’s, Gary was very active in PASCO, serving twice as their President. Gary said back then, PASCO was more involved in sponsoring events, because there weren’t a lot of clubs around at the time. PASCO was more involved in developing the sport. It was not unusual for PASCO banquets to



First 1000k Event in the State of Utah

Gary Kemp just landed in his standard class Pegasus after completing the first 1000k task in Utah - June 1994. Photo provided by Gary Kemp.

have 300 attendees. Today, the numbers have dropped considerably.

The Longest Thermal Task in the USA

Gary Kemp started running contests along with Gary Knapp in 1981. Knapp did the 15-Meter Nationals and called a 455 mile task. Kemp recalled this provided him inspiration later in 1985 as Contest Director of the Open Nationals to call the longest thermal task ever called in the entire USA.

This task was flown out of Minden. It was at 509.37 miles: Ravendale, CA, Mill City, NV, Austin, NV and return. They had eighteen completions out of twenty-four pilots. The final nineteenth pilot landed at 8:45PM, after the gate closed at 8:30PM!

He was Also the Contest Director for the Standard Nationals. He recalls that the last contest was at El Mirage, TX around 1985.

He has organized, managed and directed dozens of contests. Several of them were national contests. At times, he and his wife Nancy were Contest Directors, Manager, Organizer, Scorer and Operations (along with their grandchildren)!

He hasn't kept count of the number of contests he has organized and ran, but believes he has eight plaques on the wall at Siskiyou County.

Pioneered Flying the Mendocino's

In 1982-83, Gary pioneered flying the Mendocino's. He flew extensively out of Orland, CA, usually releasing over Red Mountain, near Chrome.

Others had flown there on occasion from Calistoga, notably Paul Sasse. Paul had flown up to the Oregon border and back to Montague. Gary started flying there because it was cheaper and saved time from going on a four hour drive (each way) to Minden!

According to Rex Mayes, Gary was affectionately considered the "Doctor of the Mendos". He was the guy to talk to if you wanted information about flying there, including the "Maxwell Shear."

Organizing the Mt. Shasta Soaring Club

Word has it that around the 1990's, Gary was one of the prime movers in getting the Mount Shasta Soaring Club formed. His leadership helped to make it happen.

When asked, Gary said this was true to some extent. However, he was just one of a group of twelve, who combined to organize MSSC. He recalls that Dale Bush was the first president. Then Gary was for a number of years, just finishing this year. He promoted and ran many national contests at Siskiyou. There were many others, like Dale Bush, Mallory Lynch, John Sinclair, Ray Gimney that were involved as well. Gary was once President of our very own VSA (Valley Soaring Association)!

Ameriglide

Gary was one of the planners in setting up the Ameriglide as the next World's Soaring competition site at Minden. He was involved with Carl Herold and Bernald Smith in the planning and was its Operational Director.

After everything fell apart due to the fire bomber conflict, the 1992 World Soaring competition was moved to Uvalde, TX. Gary later re-wrote the Use Agreement with the county. It was approved and used for many years.

Carl Herod Projects

Gary had worked with Carl Herold on a lot of projects. This included locating and measuring airports in our areas for Carl's database. He also worked a couple of Carl's soaring seminars.

The First 1000k Event in Utah

In June 1994, Gary flew the first 1000k in Utah. He placed 250th in the world for the 1000k distance. He was only one out of twenty-five that did it in a standard class. He was flying the standard class Pegasus.

Charles Mueller was Gary's official observer for that flight. At the time, Charles was a professor at Chico State and member of the Chico Soaring Association.

Over the years, Gary has set 25 state records in various classes in Utah. Currently, 13 of these still stand.

US Team Captain – South Africa

2001 was a high point in Gary's life when Ray Gimney, one of the world's top glider pilot, recommended him to be the US Team Captain for the World Soaring Championship held in South Africa.

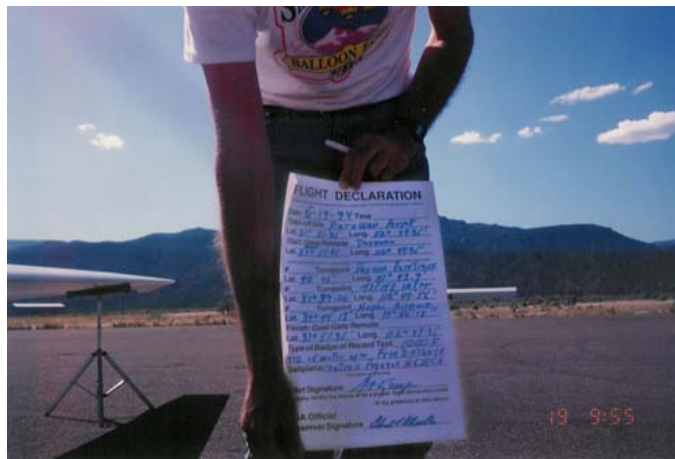
This was approved by Aland Adams, the US Contest Committee Chairman, who was later replaced by Ken Sorenson. This global event is held every other year in various places all over the world. This was the 27th World Soaring Championship.

Nancy had always wanted to see Africa and this provided the perfect opportunity. They were in South Africa for two months. Reflecting on this, Gary said he had the chance to associate with the top soaring pilots in the world.



US Team in South Africa in 2001

The US Team, just after the opening ceremonies. Photo provided by John Seaborn



First 1000k Flight Declaration in Utah

In June 1994, Gary Kemp flew the first 1000k flight in the state of Utah. The Flight Declaration is signed and held by Charles Mueller, a professor at Chico State. Photo provided by Gary Kemp.

It was quite an honor. The people were great.

He recalled that Kenny Price (Chief Instructor at Williams Soaring Center, CA) was there also, as crew for Ray Gimney.

He remembers that the airport had a unique runway that was 2.5 miles long. There were lots of thunderstorms. The elevation was 5,000 feet so there were not a lot of bugs. At the time, the exchange rate was in their favor. They ate at the best restaurants for only \$6 a person!

They were privileged to see the most dangerous animals in South Africa, known as the "Big Five": elephant, rhinoceros, leopard, lion and Cape buffalo.

This was a brief look at Gary's great soaring career from 1968 to present. Gary told me that he said a long time ago that when he got to age 70, he was going to stop flying the circuit. The time has arrived.

Nancy Kemp: "there are a lot of wives here who envy me right now!"

When he made the announcement to his wife Nancy at Montague last July, her reply was "there are a lot of wives here who envy me right now!"

Gary doesn't plan to totally stop flying, but he does plan to devote more time to Nancy, who had dedicated her life to him during his long illustrious soaring career.