

August 25, 2012

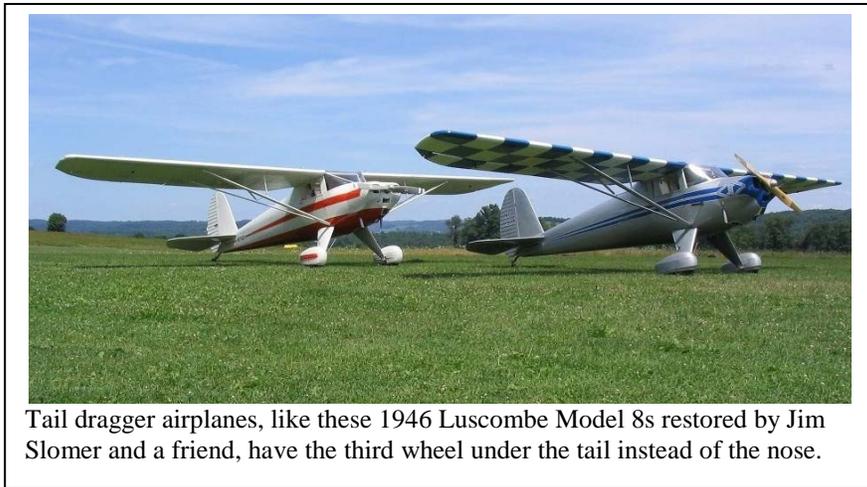
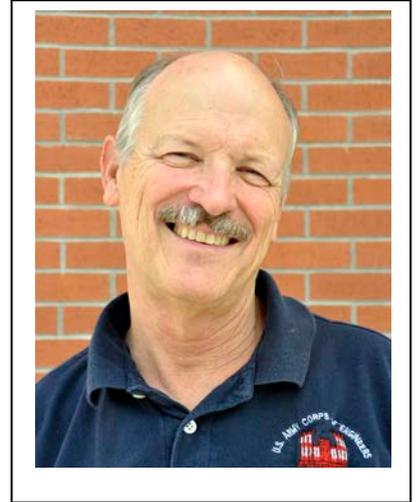
Do you know...

...Jim Slomer, an architect in the district's engineering branch and a private pilot since 1989, restored two 1946 Luscombe Model 8 aircraft? With a friend and over a six year period beginning in 1999, Slomer painstakingly restored the all-metal tail draggers to near original specifications.

"I always enjoyed the look of a Luscombe and wanted to have one of my own. When the opportunity to buy these Luscombes arose, I took it," said Slomer.

Having had an interest in model airplanes since childhood, Slomer got the first opportunity to fly during his enlistment in the U.S. Army.

"In 1966, I enlisted in the army right out of high school as an electronic signals intelligence analyst. The last two years of my enlistment I performed my job in an EA-3 (Skywarrior) aircraft ... it was a terrific experience to very routinely 'go flying' and I think it was during that time that I caught the flying bug."



Slomer grew up in a small borough just outside of Pittsburgh and attended Grove City College, in western Pennsylvania where he earned his bachelor's degree in psychology and sociology. He then earned a master's degree in architecture from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh in 1982. "I was always interested in design and art; I thought that becoming an architect was the best blend of both those interests."

Slomer flew often in the Army and always had an interest, but it wasn't until 1988 that he had enough discretionary income to pursue his pilot's license.

"I enrolled in the local community college in Allegheny County, Penn. and finished the requirements for my license in 1989." Slomer bought his first airplane, a 1946 Taylorcraft, a short time later and flew it recreationally for about 15 years.

"I'm partial to the older tail dragger airplanes, from the 40s and 50s," said Slomer. "I guess it is a little nostalgic for me. My son developed an interest in flying too and he flew his first solo flight in my Taylorcraft when he was 16."

When Slomer began working for the Corps of Engineers, he sold his Luscombe. “I took a job at the Middle East District in 2009 because I was looking for new challenges and wanted to be a part of something bigger than the architecture work I was used to,” he said.

Slomer has worked on a number of design projects for the Corps of Engineers and coming to Afghanistan has been a rewarding experience. “I deployed to Afghanistan from April 2011 to October 2011 and worked on the design of the J6 building on the USACE compound at Kandahar Airfield. I returned to Kandahar Airfield again in May 2012, when the building was almost complete, and will be here until May of 2013.”

“If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem.”

I didn't coin that phrase but I use it every day to guide my actions. Having a positive attitude toward others makes a difference and that's especially important in Afghanistan.” -Jim Slomer

“Jim has been an invaluable asset to Engineering Branch,” said Harrison Sutcliff, the chief of engineering at the district. “His extensive architectural experience in both private industry and with the Corps of Engineers combined with his experience in the contingency environment help enable the engineering branch in production of our construction contract documents and technical assistance to the field offices.”

Working as an architect in a contingency environment is a unique and rewarding experience Slomer said but he misses flying. While he does not currently own an operable airplane, he said, “I have a project — a 60 percent complete Stolp Starduster Too biplane. I plan to complete it when I retire.”